

**ISLAMIC VIEW
OF
PERSONALITY
DEVELOPMENT**

*By
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Preface

Researchers and scientists create appropriate concepts in different fields. These concepts emerge from assumptions, observational knowledge and creative research. The resulting theories can be right or wrong. But, I have adopted a different approach here. I have presented concepts derived from the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). As they are derived from Divine Guidance, they would lead people to the right path. They would be free from flaws and errors, and would be helpful for entire mankind.

The book comprises of articles categorised into three chapters. They are Key Terms, Personality and Ethics in Practice. The reasoning used is based on the verses of Qur'an. Second source is the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Third, the sayings (hadiths) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) have been studied. The uniqueness of the book is that the articles are supplemented with suitable diagrams, which would help in getting a better understanding.

The first chapter presents key terms such as spiritual development, eternal success, Allah's pleasure, salah, jihad, belief in Allah, belief in last day, recognition of God, and human responsibilities.

The second chapter 'Personality' covers such aspects as growth of individual, good tendencies, evil tendencies, management of anger, knowledge acquisition, knowledge growth, happiness, misery, best conduct, righteousness, God consciousness, accountability and right conduct.

The third chapter 'Ethics in Practice' is about such topics as, moderation, forgiveness, prosperity, human needs, love for Allah, barakah, charity and holistic caring.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "(This is) a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, (O Muhammad), that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of

understanding would be reminded" (Qur'an 38: 29). Allah makes it clear in the Qur'an that He has revealed the Qur'an so that people might reflect upon it. Accordingly, I have tried to reflect on Qur'anic statements.

The teachings of Islam have a lot of wisdom which is hidden. What is required is research with patience. The book is an humble attempt to explore new ideas. With my limited knowledge and my little bit of research, I was able to derive concepts from the sources of Islam. Certainly there are many other insights to be gained. The deeper we go into the teachings of Islam, the more precious gems we would be able to discover. Let this book be a source of motivation for the youth to learn the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammed (pbuh).

For me, writing this book has been a great learning experience. The task gave me an opportunity to learn the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from new perspectives. This book helped me to effectively utilize my time and talent. I pray to Allah (swt) to accept my little efforts.

Syed Kazim

Acknowledgements

Saying 'Thank You' is more than good manners, it is good spirituality. One who is most deserving of thanks and praise from people is Allah, may He be glorified. He bestowed great favours and blessings on us in both spiritual and worldly terms. Allah has also commanded us to offer thanks to Him for those blessings.

Islam encourages us to thank people for their favours and kindness. Just like worship is a requirement for a slave of Allah, so too is thanking people, for their kindness. Islam orders us to worship and praise Allah and also to thank people for their favours. Thanking people is very important in Islam, as Prophet (pbuh) said, "He who does not thank people, does not thank Allah" (Ahmad and Tirmidhi).

I praise Allah for rightly guiding me, to use my talent and knowledge in His cause. I thank Allah for giving me new ideas, capability and commitment to write this book.

I would like to thank my parents for giving me the best possible education and making me confident enough to take up new things in life. I would also like to thank my beloved wife, for her continuous moral support, assistance and for taking care of my two children, which helped me in completing the book with complete focus.

I would like to thank my teacher and guide, Mr. Ameenul Hassan, for his ideas and valuable inputs, which have played a significant role to improve the creativity and quality of the book.

I would like to thank my friend, Mr. Abid, for taking time out of his busy schedule to design all the diagrams, in a very professional manner and on time. I would also like to thank my friend, Mr. Syed Mohammed, for proof

reading the entire book, which happened over a period of two and a half years.

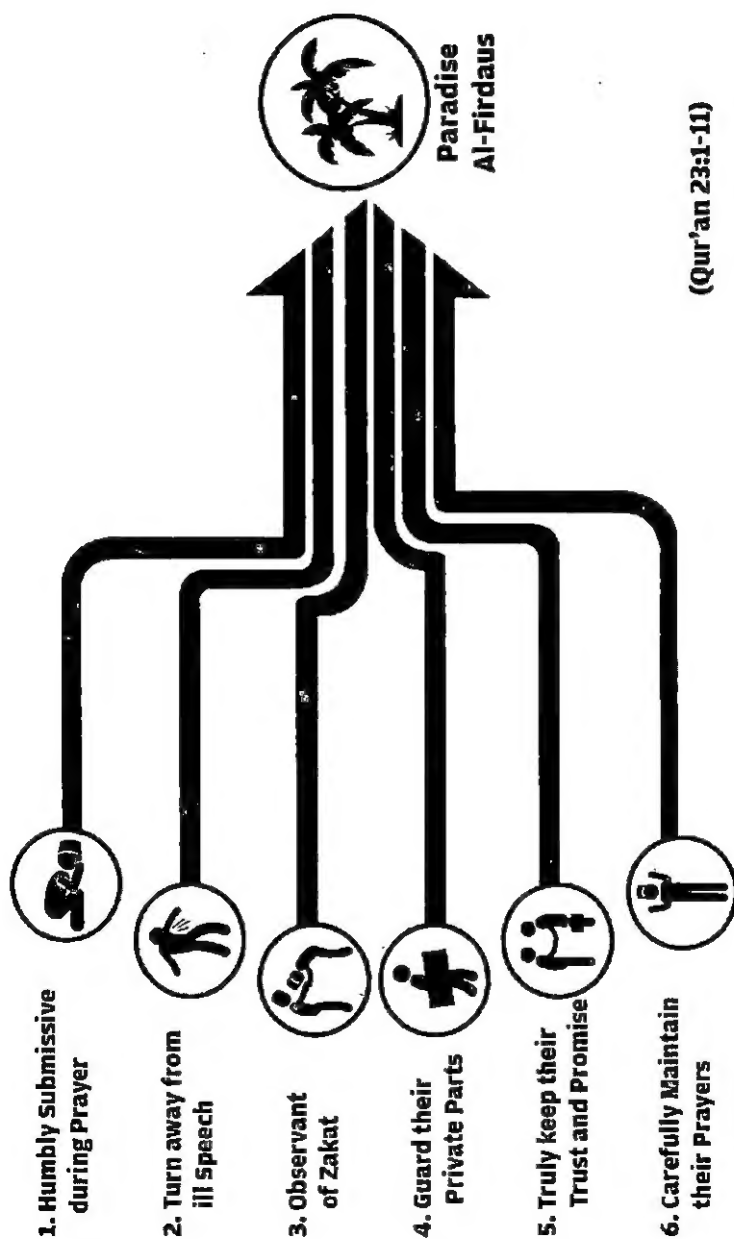
There are many other people who have directly and indirectly contributed to my personal growth, which has ultimately helped me to emerge as a consistent writer; I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

Syed Kazim

I

Key Terms

Eternal Success



Introduction

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Certainly the believers have succeeded, who during their prayer, are humbly submissive, who turn away from ill speech, who are observant of zakah, who guard their private parts, except from their wives or those whom their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed, but whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors, and they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive, and they who carefully maintain their prayers, those are the inheritors, who will inherit al-Firdaus. They will abide therein eternally" (Qur'an 23:1-11). The verses speak about six qualities which an individual has to imbibe, which would help him attain eternal success, which is paradise. These verses can also be understood as the six steps to attain success.

1. Humble Submission during Prayer

The spirit of prayer is that the slave is in awe of his Master; he should pray to Him in humble tones; and should express his obedience before Him. The guarantee of success is given to those people of faith who offer prayer with humble attitude.

Humility basically is from one's heart. Then this condition also affects the body, that is the eyes will be lowered, the voice will be low, the attention will be towards Allah only, and the prayer will be performed with tranquillity in a dignified way.

2. Turn away from Ill Speech

The believer is expected to stay away from ill and useless speech and activities. Anything that is meaningless, unproductive and of no help in achieving our purpose in life, (including slandering, backbiting, lying, cursing, swearing and inappropriate deeds) should be avoided. Word 'laghv' used by Qur'an here means vain, purposeless,

useless, meaningless, aimless acts. Such acts are waste of time and a huge distraction from one's ultimate goal.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "A sign of man's good observance of Islam (his piety) is to keep away from that which does not concern him" (Tirmidhi). Thus, one should always try not to engage, dwell and get absorbed in that which is meaningless and useless. This attitude would give him time for activities which are productive and beneficial.

3. Observant of Zakah

The objective of zakah is not only to provide means for the relief of the distressed, and promotion of welfare. It also discourages hoarding of money and commodities and thus tends to ensure a brisk circulation of resources, resulting in a healthy economic adjustment. Giving zakah reduces the love of worldly things:

The meaning is not confined to merely paying Zakah. It is extended to self-purification which includes purification of morals as well as wealth, property and personality. It does not only mean purification of one's own self but includes the purification of the lives of other people as well. It means that the believers are the people who purify themselves. Human beings have flaws in character (anger, bad temper, jealousy, etc). Zakah helps us overcome the flaws.

4. Guard their Private Parts

Guarding means to avoid engaging in sexual activities outside the marital relationship. Marriage provides full rights and security to both partners. Any sexual relation outside marriage, is not proper for men or women. Emotional and physical intimacy without commitment is not fair.

Allah has given us a family system to ensure stability in the relationship between husband and wife. As we purify our gaze, we will enjoy the company of our spouses. The 'look' is something sacred and precious. It ought to be in

the right place. It will bring fulfilment to the heart and even count as an act of worship. In the wrong place, it will increase the sense of emptiness and deprivation in the heart.

5. Keeping their Trust and Promise

Believers should keep their words by doing what they have agreed to. Establishing honesty and trustworthiness is fundamental to our relationship with the Creator. The Prophet (pbuh) was known as "Al-Ameen", "The Trustworthy".

The believers fulfill the terms of the trusts which are placed in their charge. In this connection, it should be noted that the Arabic word 'amanat' is very comprehensive and includes all those trusts which are placed in their charge by Allah or society or individuals. Likewise, 'promise' includes all contracts and pledges which are made between Allah and man, and also between man and man. The Prophet (pbuh) himself used to express the importance of pledges. Once, he said, "The one, who does not fulfil the terms of his trust, has no faith, and the one, who does not keep promises and pledges has no Islam" (Baihaqi).

6. Carefully Maintain their Prayers

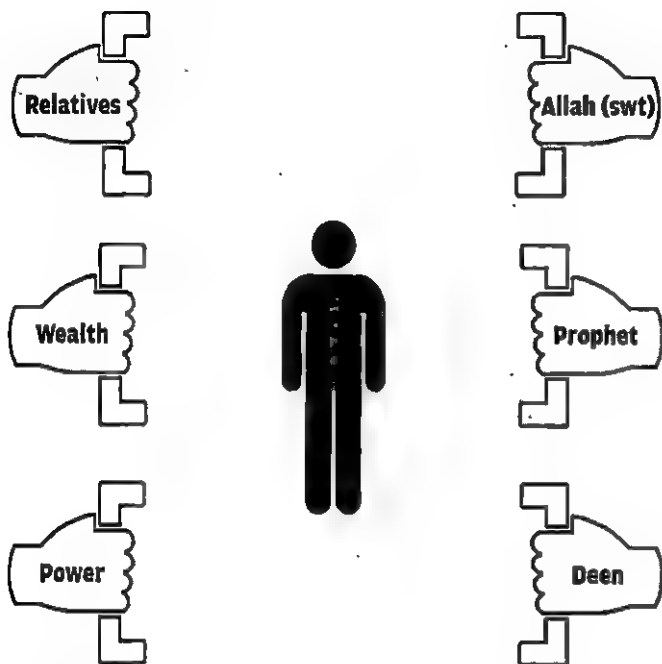
The required qualities begin with prayer and end with instructions on regularity in prayers. Praying on time and avoiding delay is one of the recommended deeds. Once, Abdullah ibn Masud asked Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) what the best deed was, and he (pbuh) replied, "Establishing prayer on time..." (Nasai).

Prayers are to be offered with due regard to their prerequisites i.e. and dress and necessary ablutions for clean body. Prayer is not an unnecessary burden, which has to be cast off somehow. Believers do not recite mechanically but understand what they recite. They are conscious that they are supplicating to their Lord like humble servants.

Conclusion

These qualities will help a person become a better human being. To inherit paradise is in fact the real success which will be the share of the people of faith. In a hadith, Firdaus has been stated as an excellent part of paradise. Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) said, ““Paradise has one hundred grades, each of which is as big as the distance between heaven and earth. The highest of them is Firdaus and the best of them is Firdaus. The Throne is above Firdaus and from it spring forth the rivers of Paradise. If you ask of Allah, ask Him for Firdaus” (Ibn Majah). Thus, every believer should aim very high and strive hard to achieve the highest level of paradise which is Firdaus.

Seeking Allah's Pleasure



Introduction

Man's love for worldly things will never end. However, without ethical constraints, such love is the main source of evil. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire; of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return" (Qur'an 3:14).

Allah also says in the Qur'an, "Say, (O Muhammad), "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His

Messenger and Jihad in His cause, 'then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people'" (Qur'an 9:24). The verses mention about the worldly things which attract man. They are of three categories.

1. Relatives

Among all centres of attraction, relatives come first. One would be ready to do anything to keep them happy. Among relatives, women (wives), sons, father and brothers are mentioned. Among all relatives, women are most influential thus they are mentioned first.

Man tends to commit wrong to please his relatives by keeping them happy. Thus, Allah gives the responsibility to man to ensure that he protects himself and his family from the eternal punishment. Allah says in the Qur'an, "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones ..." (Qur'an 66:6).

2. Wealth

Some people need wealth to fulfil their basic needs and some need money for luxury. Thus, money becomes an integral part of life. Some get so engrossed with seeking money, that they forget the objectives of their lives and tend to live selfishly. The verses refer to gold, silver, branded horses and houses, which an individual buys when he has money. Thus, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said, "Every Ummah (people) has a test to undergo; my Ummah will be tried through wealth" (Tirmidhi).

Reasonable pursuit of money is perfectly natural and even admirable, especially if spent on righteous activities. However, if the pursuit results in arrogance and evil behaviour, it is no longer admirable but a cause of sin. Some people don't buy gold, silver, branded vehicles or houses because they need them. Rather, they want to show how rich they are, that they can afford every kind of

luxury. This would make them popular and people would admire them. Their assets would give them happiness.

3. Business

Man does business to earn money. Some people get so much engrossed in business, that they lose focus on objective of life. They are wholly engaged in earning money and increasing their business. In the first verse, cattle and tilled land (prepared for cultivation of crops) are used to describe one's economic activities. Cattle can also be understood as tangible asset and land can be understood as fixed asset. The second verse, states that a person gets engrossed in his business activities completely because of the fear that his business would decline.

Once, Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) was delivering the Friday sermon. A few companions got up and went to a business exhibition which was held in Madina. Then, Allah revealed a verse saying, "But when they saw a business or entertainment, (O Muhammad), they rushed to it and left you standing. Say, "What is with Allah is better than entertainment and business, and Allah is the best of providers"" (Qur'an 62:11). This shows that people in their carelessness rush towards their business activities leaving behind the prayers, thus, one should be cautious about it.

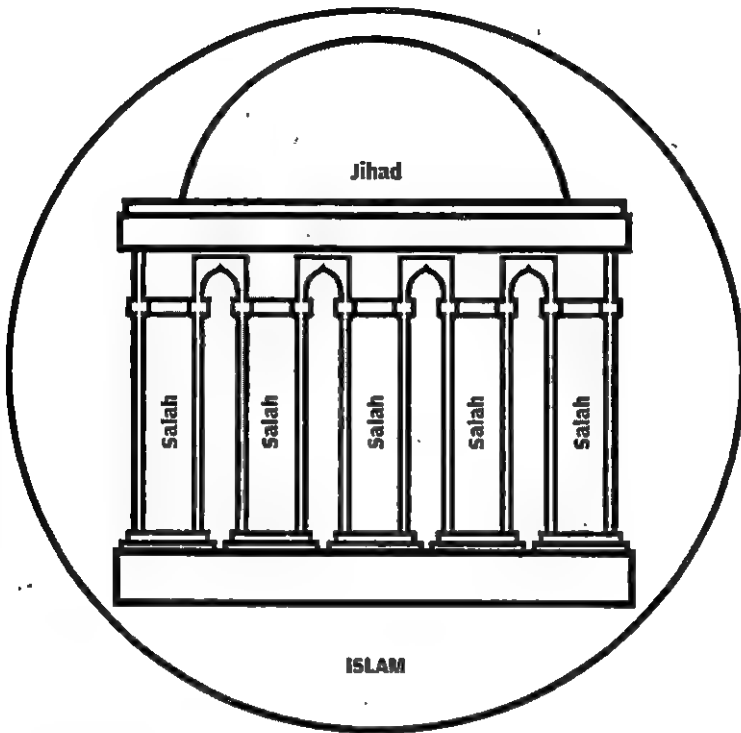
Conclusion

Relatives, money and business pull people towards worldly desires. On the other end, there is the love of Allah, of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the struggle in the cause of religion, which would take people to paradise. Worshippers of worldly desires would have to witness the wrath of Allah. Right conduct would gain the pleasure of Allah. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Say, "Shall I inform you of (something) better than that? For those who fear Allah will be gardens in the presence of their Lord beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and purified

spouses and approval from Allah. And Allah is Seeing of (His) servants" (Qur'an 3:15).

It is not wrong if one strives, in a proper way to fulfil the needs of his relatives; to earn money or to grow business. Evil begins when all these engagements take a person away from Allah. Thus, man should develop a sense of values when he is dealing with livelihood. Man should always be aware that love for worldly things might take him away from Allah. The purpose of man is to be tested; these factors would test man. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them (as to) which of them is best in deed" (Qur'an 19:7).

Significance of Salah and Jihad



Introduction

Muslims' fundamental duty is to understand Islam and know what it comprises of, so that one can follow and implement Islam in its true sense. The teachings and guidance of Prophet (pbuh) help one understand Islam, as he practically implemented Islam and showed the way. Once Prophet (pbuh) said, "Shall I not tell you about the head of the matter and its peak?", companions said, "Of course, O Messenger of Allah". The Prophet (pbuh) said, "The head of the matter is Islam, its Pillar is the Prayer, and Jihad is its Peak ..." (Tirmidhi). The hadith basically explains that Islam comprises of two main aspects, Salah

and Jihad. Salah is one of the pillars and Jihad is its peak. The following aspects are explained below:

1. Salah

The basic and most important act of worship taught to believers is Salah. Salah has extraordinary power to grant greater quality to obedience and worship. Salah means making ourselves slaves of Allah, living in submission to His will, and remaining always ready to obey Him.

Salah imparts training which sets the foundation for a greater struggle, enriching the individual and transforming him. Salah helps one to constantly remember Allah. It imparts consciousness of being a slave of Allah and inculcates fear of Allah. It creates a sense of brotherhood, imbibes uniformity, develops discipline, and awakens sense of responsibility. It gives knowledge of God's law for collective life. To attain the peak of Islam, One needs to make Salah strong.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... Indeed, Salah prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do" (Qur'an 29:45). "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and Salah. Indeed, Allah is with the patient" (Qur'an 2:153).

There are various other verses in the Qur'an which highlight the importance of Salah, such as, 2:3, 2:43, 2:45, 2:110, , 2:238, 4:101-103, 5:6, 6:72, 6:92, 7:170, 8:3, 8:35, 9:5, 9:11, 9:18, 9:71, 10:87, 11:114, 13:22, 14:31, 14:37, 14:40, 17:78, 17:110, 19:31, 19:55, 19:59, 20:14, 20:132, 21:73, 22:35, 22:41, 22:78, 23:2, 23:9, 24:41, 24:56, 31:17, 33:33, 35:29, 62:9-10, 70:22-23, 70:34, 73:20 and 98:5.

2. Jihad (Struggle)

Jihad means struggling in the way of Allah. The message of Islam is to abolish the lordship of man over man and bring human personality under the rule of One God. To stake everything we have, including our lives, to

achieve this purpose, is called Jihad. Salah, Fasting, Zakah and Hajj, create qualities in believers which motivate them to struggle in the way of Allah.

There are many places in the Qur'an where Allah has highlighted the importance of struggling in his cause. Allah says, "And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good" (Qur'an 29:69). "O you who have believed, fear Allah and seek the means (of nearness) to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed" (Qur'an 3:35).

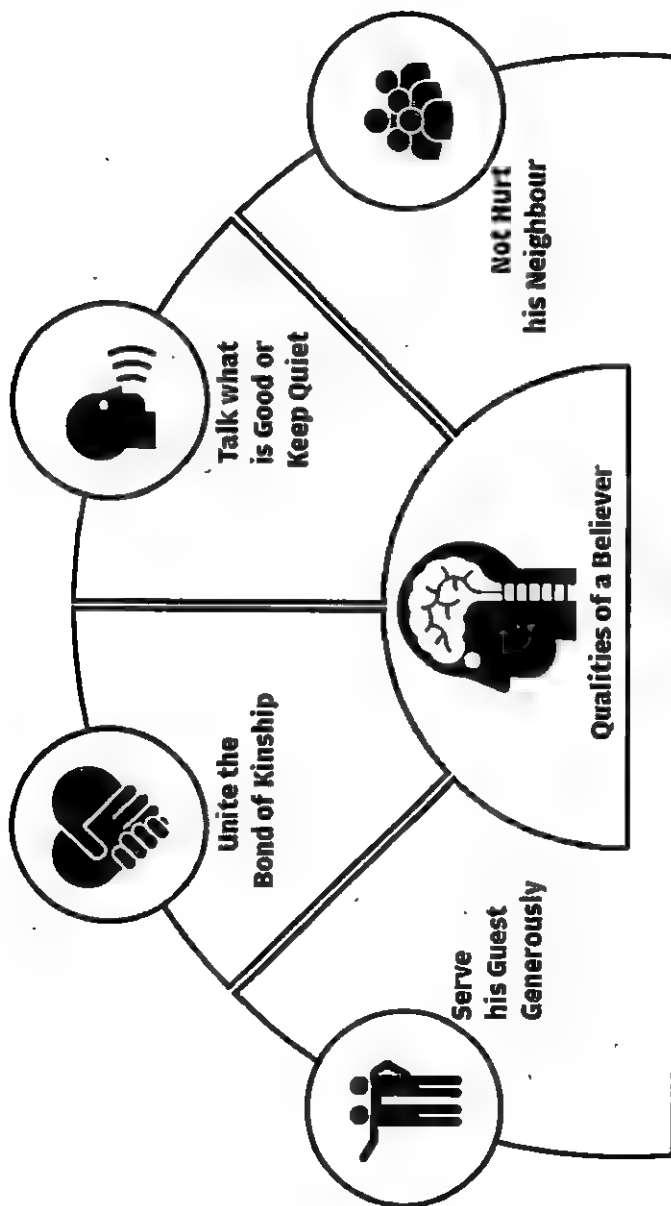
There are many other verses which speak about Jihad and its importance, such as, 2:154, 2:190-191, 2:193, 2:216, 2:218, 2:244, 3:142, 3:157-158, 3:169, 3:171, 3:195, 4:71-77, 4:84, 4:95, 4:104, 5:54, 8:15-16, 8:39-41, 8:45-46, 8:55-57, 8:60-62, 8:74-75, 9:5-6, 9:12-16, 9:20, 9:24, 9:29, 9:36, 9:38-41, 9:44, 9:73, 9:88-89, 9:111, 9:120-123, 22:39-40, 22:58-59, 22:78, 29:6, 33:23, 47:4-7, 47:35, 48:16, 49:15, 57:10, 57:25, 59:2-7, 60:1-2, 61:4, 61:10-14, 66:9 and 100:1-5.

Prophet (pbuh) said, "One day in the path of Allah is better than fasting the entire month and praying in that month" (Muslim). "Standing in the ranks before the battle starts is better than worshipping Allah for sixty years" (Al-Hakim).

Conclusion

Islam is a complete way of life. Islam liberates people from false ways. Message of Prophets is to let Islam guide people in all aspects of life. Allah says, "It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allah dislike it" (Qur'an 9:33). To achieve this objective, we need strong faith and discipline. Salah trains one towards it and sets a strong foundation. One needs to struggle in the way of Allah to achieve the ultimate objective of the prophetic mission.

Belief in Allah (swt) and the Last Day



Introduction

Abu Huraira narrated, that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should unite the bond of kinship (i.e. keep good relations with his kith and kin); and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should talk what is good or keep quiet" (Bukhari). "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should not hurt his neighbour and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak what is good or keep silent" (Bukhari). The hadith gives us a litmus test to know if one believe in Allah and the Last Day. The four characteristics are explained below.

1. Serve his Guest Generously

The first characteristic of a person, who believes in Allah and the last day is that he serves his guest with generosity. Entertaining a guest is an important feature of Islam, which signifies the respect and concern of a host towards his guest. It is obligatory upon every Muslim to welcome his guest whether rich or poor, Muslim or non-Muslim; with a cheerful countenance without the least expression of unpleasantness.

Hospitality is the right of a guest upon his host and he does him no favour in it because its reward is with Allah. The host should adopt a humble and courteous attitude towards his guest.

2. Unite the Bond of Kinship

The second characteristic of a person who believes in Allah and the last day is that he unites the bonds of kinship. He never breaks relationships with his near and far relatives. If relationship ties are strained, he would make all possible attempts to correct them and convert them into a smooth relationship.

Maintaining ties of kinship does not merely imply visiting or helping one's relatives, in return for similar deeds on their part. True upholding of family relations is to keep good contact with those who do not treat us well. It refers to visit relatives who do not visit us and do good to those who are indifferent to us.

3. Talk what is Good or Keep Quiet

The third characteristic of a person who believes in Allah and the last day is that, his talk is good or he keeps quiet. One should not talk about something which is of no use; he should only speak when, he feels that it would be beneficial. When one is speaking, he should always ensure that it is true, worth while and useful.

This is an exhortion to speak what is good and beneficial; at the same time it is a warning, cautioning us to be careful in what we say, lest we say something that is harmful or false. One should guard the tongue as many wrong things happen because of tongue. It can hurt people, it can break relationships, it can cause problems, it can lead to dissemination of wrong information.

4. Not Hurt his Neighbour

The fourth characteristic of a person who believes in Allah and the last day is that he does not hurt the neighbours. A neighbour has rights over us. Islam lays great importance on harmonious relations in a community, through peace and care among neighbours.

The best way to ensure good human relations is to start from one's closest circle, i.e. neighbours, so that this chain of good behaviour becomes wider. If everyone cared for those next-door, there would be no animosity among neighbours.

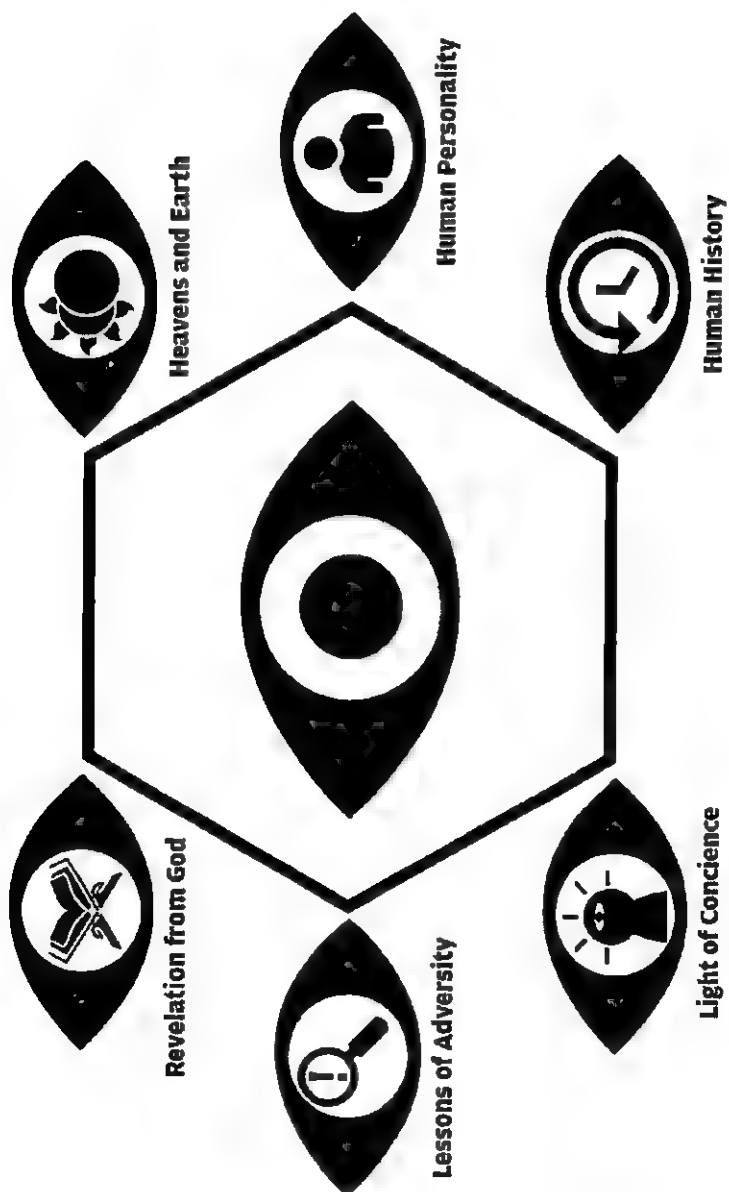
Conclusion

Society involves relations of interdependence among individuals. It has norms and values, which guide people to

perform their duties and get their rights. Islam lays great importance on harmony in community, through peace and mutual care. All the four characteristics have this in common; they deal with interpersonal relationships. They act as a litmus test to check if people really believe in Allah and the last day.

If people serve their guests, it would give them respect in the eyes of the guest. By uniting the bond of kinship, network of relatives is maintained who would come to his help and support whenever needed. Talking good and refraining from bad, would help a person avoid wastage of time and would preserve relationships. By not hurting one's neighbours, one would develop a good reputation. Thus, the four aspects would confirm that belief is sincere. Good behaviour would lead to happy life in the world and in the next life.

Avenues to Recognize God



Introduction

One can attain success only if one follows the teachings of Allah. In order to follow divine teachings, he needs to realize that God exists. People are not able to see God, but Allah has given various signs which would help people feel the existence of God. Signs are available around us. Those with pure intentions, who observe things without bias, would surely be guided towards truth. Allah does not punish human beings without providing guidance.

1. Signs in the Universe

Allah says in the Qur'an, "We will show them Our signs in the horizons ..." (Qur'an 41:53). "And a sign for them is the dead earth. We have brought it to life and brought forth from it grain, and from it they eat. And We placed therein gardens of palm trees and grapevines and caused to burst forth therefrom some springs. That they may eat of His fruit. And their hands have not produced it, so will they not be grateful? Exalted is He who created all pairs – from what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know. And a sign for them is the night. We remove from it the (light of) day, so they are (left) in darkness. And the sun runs (on course) toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing. And the moon – We have determined for it phases, until it returns (appearing) like the old date stalk. It is not allowable (i.e., possible) for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming. And a sign for them is that We carried their forefathers in a laden ship. And We created for them from the likes of it that which they ride. And if We should will, We could drown them; then no one responding to a cry would there be for them, nor would they be saved. Except as a mercy from Us and provision for a time" (Qur'an 36:33-44).

Thus, the creation of Allah provides proofs, which help people recognise God, if they observe the creation without

any bias. There are many verses in the Qur'an about the vast creation of Allah, such as, 30:22, 32:4, 40:57, 50:38, 64:3, 65:12, 71:15 and 79:27.

2. Man

Allah says, "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?" (Qur'an 41:53). When man observes himself, he understands how complex his body is. It needs wisdom of the wise creator to create a machine like this. There are many verses in the Qur'an which talk about man, such as, 2:30, 4:1, 6:2, 6:98, 7:11-12, 7:189, 15:26, 15:28-29, 15:33, 16:4, 18:37, 19:9, 22:5, 23:12-14, 25:54, 30:20, 32:7-9, 35:11, 36:77, 38:71, 38:76, 39:6, 40:67, 49:13, 53:32, 55:14, 56:57-59, 71:17, 75:37-39, 76:1-2, 77:20-23, 80:18-19, 86:5-7 and 96:2.

3. Problems in Life

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return"" (Qur'an 2:155-156). Man encounters many problems in life. They provide lessons to man. Allah teaches people to think correctly, as they encounter problems in life. In the events around them, they can recognise the signs of Allah.

There are many verses in the Qur'an which talk about human beings; some verses are: 2:49, 2:102, 2:155-156, 2:214, 3:179, 3:186, 5:48, 6:164-165, 7:141, 7:155, 8:25, 8:28, 9:49, 11:7, 14:6, 16:92-93, 17:60, 18:7, 21:35, 21:111, 22:11, 22:53, 25:20, 29:2-3, 29:10, 39:49, 43:33, 47:4, 51:56, 57:25, 64:15, 67:2, 74:31, 76:2 and 89:15-16.

4. Conscience

Allah says in the Qur'an, "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. (Adhere to) the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created (all) people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know" (Qur'an 30:30). Prophet (pbuh) has also said, "Every child who is born, is born on the human nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist, etc. afterwards. Its example is that of an animal which gives birth to complete and sound young ones, none is born with torn and cut off ears, but the Polytheist tear their ears afterwards on account of their superstitions of ignorance" (Bukhari and Muslim).

Once Prophet (pbuh) said during an address, "My Lord says, I had created all My servants on true faith; then the Satan came and led them astray from their faith and made unlawful what I had made lawful for them and commanded them to associate with Me those for whom I have sent down no authority" (Ahmad). All human beings have been created on true nature. They know that none but One Allah, is their Creator and Lord and Deity. We should remain true to this human nature. If we adopt the attitude of revolt against God, it will be violation of our nature. If one serves and worships another besides Allah, then one would be acting against nature. Thus, conscience will surely guide one to the straight path.

5. History

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Have they not seen how many generations We destroyed before them which We had established upon the earth as We have not established you? And We sent (rain from) the sky upon them in showers and made rivers flow beneath them; then We destroyed them for their sins and brought forth after them a generation of others" (Qur'an 6:6). We can learn lessons from history.

Allah has destroyed many nations because of sins and disobedience.

For example, Allah destroyed the people of Nuh. Qur'an talks about it in 11:38, 7:59 and 11:44. Allah destroyed the people of Aad. Qur'an mentions it in 89:6-8, 46:21, 41:15 and 69:6. Allah destroyed the people of Thamud. (Qur'an 7:73 and 7:77-78). Destruction of people of Lut is narrated in 11:81-82. Allah describes destruction of the people of Madyan, in 7:85, 7:88, 11:84 and 11:94. Allah destroyed Pharaoh and his people. Qur'an talks about them in 2:49-50 and 10:92. There are many more examples of divine punishment.

6. Revelation

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from (any) other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction" (Qur'an 4:82). Prophets were often given miracles. The miracle given to the last Prophet (pbuh) was the Qur'an. No one can point out a single mistake or contradiction in it.

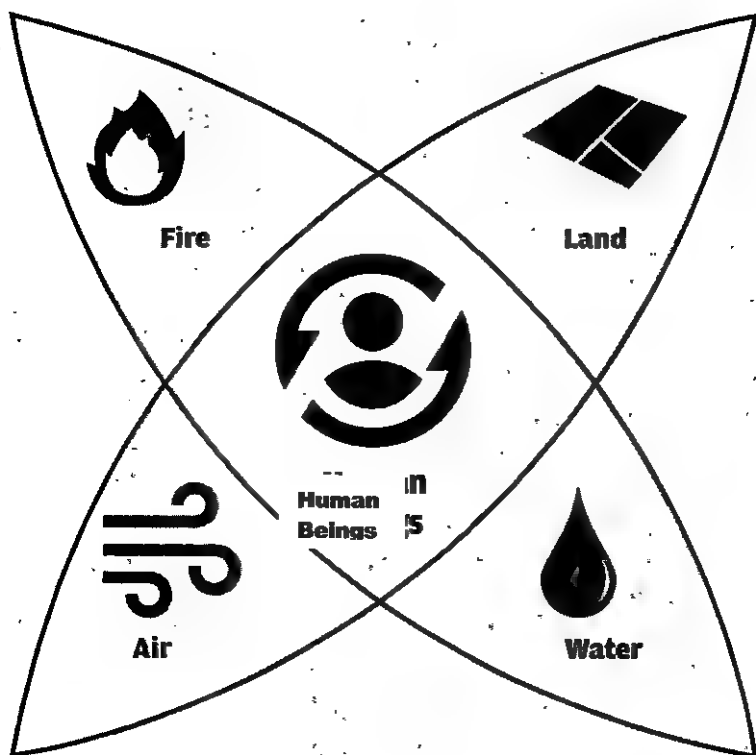
In Qur'an, there are many places where Allah states that the Qur'an is from him, 2:176, 2:252, 3:3, 3:7, 3:108, 4:105, 4:113, 4:136, 4:166, 6:114, 6:155, 7:2, 7:196, 10:16, 10:37, 10:94, 11:1, 12:2-3, 13:1, 14:1, 15:9, 15:87, 16:44, 16:101-102, 17:105-106, 18:1-2, 21:10, 21:50, 22:16, 24:34, 24:46, 25:6, 26:192-195, 28:86, 29:51, 32:2, 35:31, 36:5, 38:29, 39:1-2, 39:23, 39:41, 40:2, 41:2-4, 41:41-42, 42:17, 42:52, 43:1-4, 44:2-3, 45:2, 45:6, 46:2, 56:77-80, 57:9, 69:43 and 76:23. There are many verses in the Qur'an where Qur'an mentions its uniqueness, 2:23-24, 4:82, 10:37-38, 11:1, 11:13-14, 15:9, 17:88, 29:48-49, 41:41-42 and 59:21. The Qur'an on many occasions confirms the former revelations 2:41, 2:91, 2:97, 3:3, 4:47, 5:15, 5:48, 6:92, 10:37, 12:111, 46:12 and 46:30. The Qur'an announces that it is guidance for people in, 2:2, 2:97, 2:185, 3:138, 5:15-16, 6:155, 7:170, 7:203, 12:2, 12:111, 14:1,

16:64, 16:89, 16:102, 17:9, 22:16, 27:1-2, 27:76-77, 31:2-3, 34:6, 38:29, 41:44, 45:11, 45:20, 57:9, 72:1-2 and 72:13.

Conclusion

The world is filled with signs from Allah. One only has to start thinking and use his mind, to be guided to the right path. Allah shows His signs so that people may understand and realise the truth. In spite of all the signs; if they fail to accept the truth, then they would invite Allah's punishment. Man, on the day of judgement can not offer the excuse that he did not receive a sign or message from Allah. Allah has provided guidance to humanity by revealing the Qur'an.

Natural Resources and Human Responsibilities



Introduction

The Qur'an mentions the four elements, i.e., earth, water, wind and fire, in various places. These four elements are required to sustain human life and its existence. Craze for mastery over elements is the key reason for war and bloodshed in the world. These elements are also needed by plants and animals.

1. Land

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And have you seen that (seed) which you sow? Is it you who makes it grow, or are

We the grower? If We willed, We could make it (dry) debris, and you would remain in wonder, (Saying), "Indeed, we are (now) in debt; Rather, we have been deprived". (Qur'an 56:63-67). In these verses, Allah is using the example of earth and presents the argument that it is Allah who has given life to the earth so that it could be suitable for vegetation. There are many places in the Qur'an, where Allah has spoken about the earth, such as in, 7:54, 10:3, 11:7, 13:3, 15:19, 2:29, 21:3, 25:59, 30:8, 32:4, 41:9, 50:38, 51:48 and 65:12.

Nations are fighting among one another in different parts of the world because they want to own a part of the land. To grow a tree, we need earth to sow the seed and then the earth plays its role by holding its roots, providing the required energy and the mature tree would grow and fulfil its objective. With respect to personality, some human beings are like the earth; strong and supportive.

2. Water

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?" (Qur'an 56:68-70). In these verses, Allah has used the example of water stating that, the water which we drink is provided by Him. Allah could have made the water bitter, unsuitable for drinking. Sweet water is a great favour from Allah. There are many places in the Qur'an, where Allah has spoken about water, such as in, 2:22, 6:99, 7:57, 8:11, 10:24, 13:17, 14:32, 15:22, 16:1, 20:53, 22:63, 23:18, 24:45, 25:48, 25:54, 29:63, 30:24, 32:27, 35:27, 39:21, 41:39, 43:11, 50:9, 78:14 and 86:11.

Nations are fighting among one another for water. In the days to come, water is going to be a precious resource. Plants need water to grow; if they do not get water they will die. Allah provides water in the form of rain. With respect

to personality, many human beings are like water; changing colour based on what it is mixed with.

3. Fire

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And have you seen the fire that you ignite? Is it you who produced its tree, or are We the producer? We have made it a reminder and provision for the travellers, so exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great" (Qur'an 56:71-74). The sun is a ball of fire. On the earth, oil is a significant source of energy. In these verses, Allah has referred to fire. It is due to provision made by Allah that we are able to ignite fire. There are many places in the Qur'an, where Allah has spoken about fire, as in, 7:12, 13:17, 15:27, 38:76 and 55:15.

Today powerful nations are targeting countries which are rich in energy (oil) and are indulging in mass killing; this is only to gain control over oil. Plants need energy from the sun, without which they will not be able to grow. With respect to personality, many human beings are like fire; short tempered and aggressive.

4. Wind

Allah says in the Qur'an, "So as for Thamud, they were destroyed by the overpowering (blast). And as for Aad, they were destroyed by a screaming, violent wind. Which He (i.e., Allah) imposed upon them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so you would see the people therein fallen as if they were hollow trunks of palm trees. Then do you see of them any remains?" (Qur'an 69:5-8). Wind exists in atmosphere. Several gases are present in Earth's surroundings. In these verses, Allah refers to the people of Aad whom Allah destroyed through a violent wind. There are many other places in the Qur'an that talk about wind, such as, 2:164, 7:57, 10:22, 15:22, 17:69, 18:45, 21:81, 25:48, 30:46, 30:48, 30:51, 33:9, 34:12, 35:9, 38:36, 42:33, 45:5, 46:24, 51:1, 51:41, 54:19 and 77:1-3.

Now many nations aspire to have control over space; they will not allow people from other countries to use their space to fly. Plants need the air present in the atmosphere to grow, so that they can bear fruit. With respect to personality, some human beings are like wind; they are not stable in behaviour and cause destruction at times.

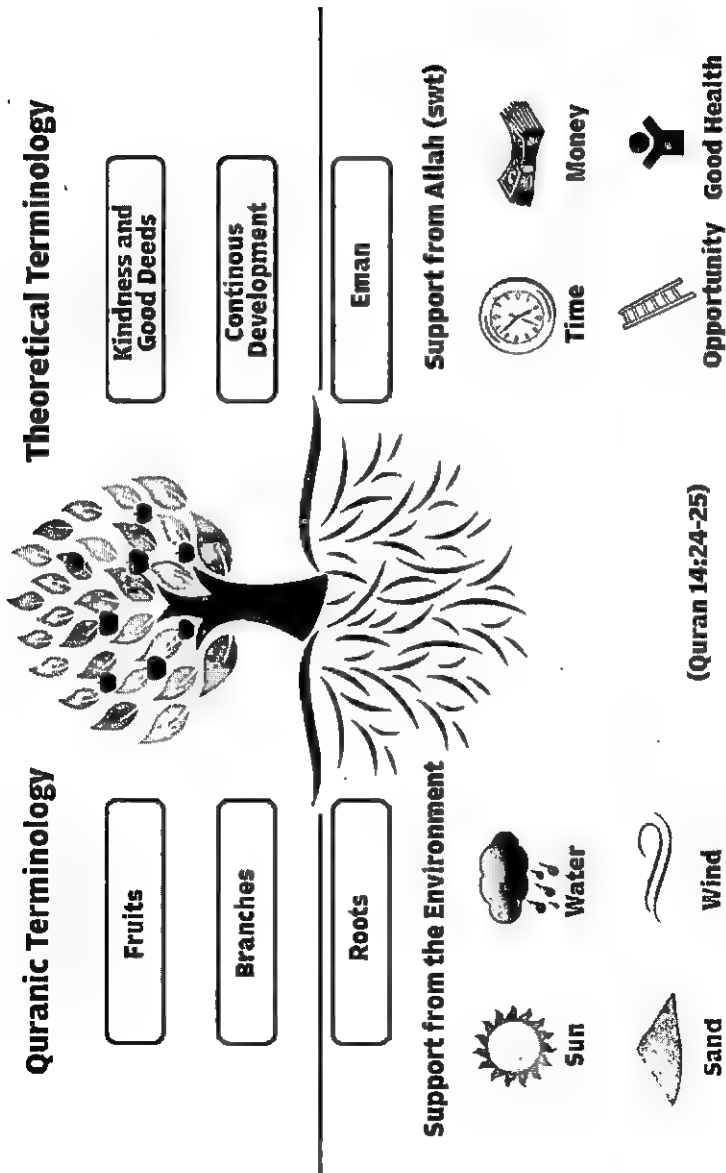
Conclusion

Allah has spoken about these four elements in the Qur'an. Allah has asked people about the real creator. All the natural resources which are created by Allah belong to Him alone. People who have authority, should not misuse them or take undue advantage of them. Man should be grateful to Allah for the four elements and other resources. Due to them, the existence of human beings on earth has been possible.

II

Personality

Personality, Essence and Growth



Introduction

Personality is defined as the enduring personal characteristics of individuals. Personality development refers to the creation of a personality with stable traits, maturity and nobility. Personality is reflected in one's choices, behaviour and crucial decisions. Personality is visible through attitudes that make a person distinctive. Personality development occurs through ongoing interaction of a person with environment.

The study of personality is based on the essential insight that people are similar in some ways, yet different in others. Thoughts, feelings, and behaviour patterns distinguish one person from another; such differences often persist over time and situations. The study of personality has a broad and varied history in psychology with an abundance of theoretical traditions. The major contemporary theories include dispositional, psychodynamic, humanistic, biological, behaviourist and evolutionary.

Islam is a complete system that impacts all areas of a person's life. Thus, it guides us about personality also. Among its percepts are growth and benevolence. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, (making) a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches (high) in the sky? It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded" (Qur'an 14:24-25). This is a verse which speaks about good word which translates into good deeds. Personality development of the individual is similar to that of a healthy tree.

1. Belief – (Roots)

The first aspect mentioned in the verse, is about the roots of a tree. Roots of a tree are similar to belief of an individual. If the roots are firmly fixed in the earth, the tree grows become strong and high. Allah says in the Qur'an,

“...Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger...” (Qur'an 4:136). Thus, an individual can only develop himself when he has a strong belief in Islam.

2. Continuous Development – (Branches)

The second aspect mentioned in the verse is about the branches of a tree. The branches resemble the continuous development of personality. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “He whose two days are equal, is a loser” (Daiylami). An individual should always focus on improvement. One who does not learn something new every day; is termed a loser. A believer is racing towards Paradise. Believers always try to have their today, better than their yesterday. They want to grow their conviction and enlarge their good deeds. They try to devote more time, energy, and resources with each passing day to win Allah's pleasure. They want their inner self to be better today than it was yesterday. They don't want to repeat their mistakes, they learn from their experiences, and try to purify their hearts. Their intentions become better all the time. Thus, an individual should continuously grow in character, knowledge and talent.

3. Good deeds (Fruits)

The third aspect mentioned in the verse is of fruits. Fruits refer to the service that an individual can render to society. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “The best of people are those with the most excellent character” (Tabarani). “The upper (giving) hand is better than the lower (taking) hand” (Bukhari and Muslim). Thus, the personality of an individual can only be effective and fruitful when he contributes to the society, using his skills and talent. Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) once said, “The best of people are those that bring most benefit to mankind” (Darqutni and Hasan).

Contribution of Environment

In order for the tree to grow, there is contribution from the entire universe, like the sunlight, wind, water and soil. Similarly, when a person plans to develop his own self, then Allah gives him resources to grow. They include money, time and good health. When one wants to grow his personality then Allah will help him as Allah says "... And Allah will surely support those who support Him (i.e., His cause). Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might" (Qur'an 22:40).

Insight

A similar example of a tree is also used by the Prophet (pbuh). Abdullah ibn Umar said, "We were sitting in the company of Prophet (pbuh) when palm core (an edible tuber growing at the upper end of the palm trunk) was brought to him. While eating it, he said, 'From among the many trees, there is a green tree. Its goodness and benefits are like that of a Muslim. Its leaves do not fall nor do they scatter about. It produces its fruit at its appropriate time by the permission of its Sustainer. It is similar to a Muslim...' (Bukhari and Muslim). This hadith compared a beneficial tree to a Muslim. As the tree is growing and benefiting people regularly, a Muslim should also do the same.

In another hadith, Prophet (pbuh) said, "... By the one in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, the example of the believer is that of a date palm: It consumes what is wholesome, it produces what is wholesome, and no matter what happens, it will not break or spoil ..." (Ahmed).

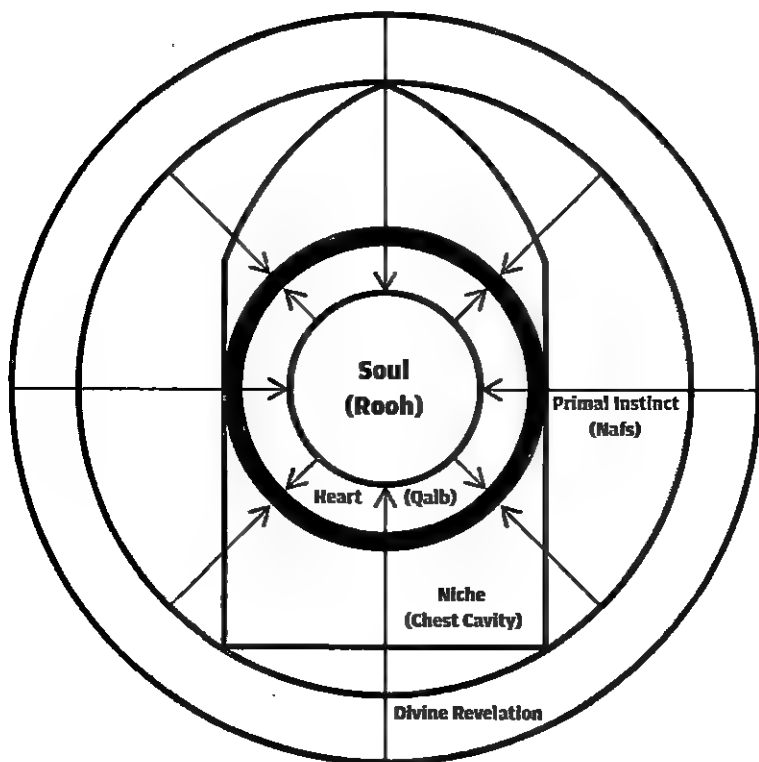
Conclusion

Islam provides a comprehensive route for personality development. A man should possess pure belief and worship Allah only. He should control his desires, be careful about his time, organize his affairs, earn a living through pure means and be beneficial to those around him. In order to achieve all this, a person should be physically,

spiritually and intellectually strong. Thus, Islam gives importance to personality development in all dimensions, on a continuous basis.

When we observe nature around us, things do not live for themselves. For example, the rivers don't drink their own water, and the trees don't eat their own fruits. Similarly, Islam gives emphasis on growth of one's personality; such that the mature individual contributes to growth of others around him.

Primal Instinct, Heart and Soul



(Quran 24:35)

Introduction

Personality is reflected in the enduring personal characteristics of an individual. Personality development occurs through correct choices, cultivation of good traits and noble decisions that a person makes in life. Personality development gives rise to organized pattern of behaviour and attitudes that make a person distinctive. Personality

development involves ongoing interaction of an individual with environment.

The concept of personality is based on three aspects, namely, primal instinct, heart and soul. Late Dr. Israr Ahmed of Tanzeem-e-Islami in Pakistan, has spoken on this concept, giving commentary on verse 24:35. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly (white) star lit from (the oil of) a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things" (Qur'an 24:35).

The verse, refers to the 'Primal Instinct' (Nafs). The glass pane represents the 'Heart' (Qalb), the flame within the lamp represents the 'Soul' (Rooh), and the Niche (which contains the glass pane and lamp) represents the 'Chest Cavity/Ribcage' of a human being, as it looks similar to a Niche. The following is a description of the three aspects of human personality:

1. Primal Instinct (Nafs)

Nafs is just pleasure-seeking; it seeks to avoid pain. If human beings allow the Primal Instinct to gain supremacy, then they will show no better behaviour than animals. It is this element of Primal Instinct, within the human psyche, that Islam seeks to control. One form of struggle (Jihad) in Islam is the struggle against one's Primal Instinct (Jihad with Nafs). The Soul on the other hand is just opposite to the Primal Instinct. Its job is to pull people towards good and lead them to nobility. The Soul basically resides in the Qalb (heart):

2. Heart (Qalb)

Heart continuously changes. At times it is pulled by Primal Instinct to one side and by Soul to the other. If a person is more inclined towards his Primal Instinct, then the glass gets covered with dust. The Prophet (pbuh) has used the metaphor of a black dot on the heart, for every bad deed. Prophet has wonderfully explained this concept. He said, "When a slave (a person) commits a sin (an evil deed) a black dot is dotted on his heart. Then if that person gives up that evil deed (sin), begs Allah to forgive him, and repents, then his heart is cleared (from that dot); but if he repeats the evil deed (sin), then that covering is increased till his heart is completely covered with it. And this is 'Ar-Ran' that Allah mentioned (in the Qur'an), "No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning" (Qur'an 83:14)" (Tirmidhi). On the other hand, if the individual avoids sin, the glass is clear. Then the flame not only enlightens a person's own Primal Instinct but can also project the light further and positively influence others.

3. Soul (Rooh)

Soul is the essence of human life. Soul is regarded as an eternal aspect of one's life. It is non material aspect within the body of the human person. It is considered to be the purest element of an individual's personality. It pulls the individual towards good.

Light upon Light

In the latter part of the verse, Allah refers to 'light upon light'. The first light is emitted by the soul to do good. The second light is from the revelation of Allah. When both these lights unite, man is completely enlightened and achieves a peaceful state of mind.

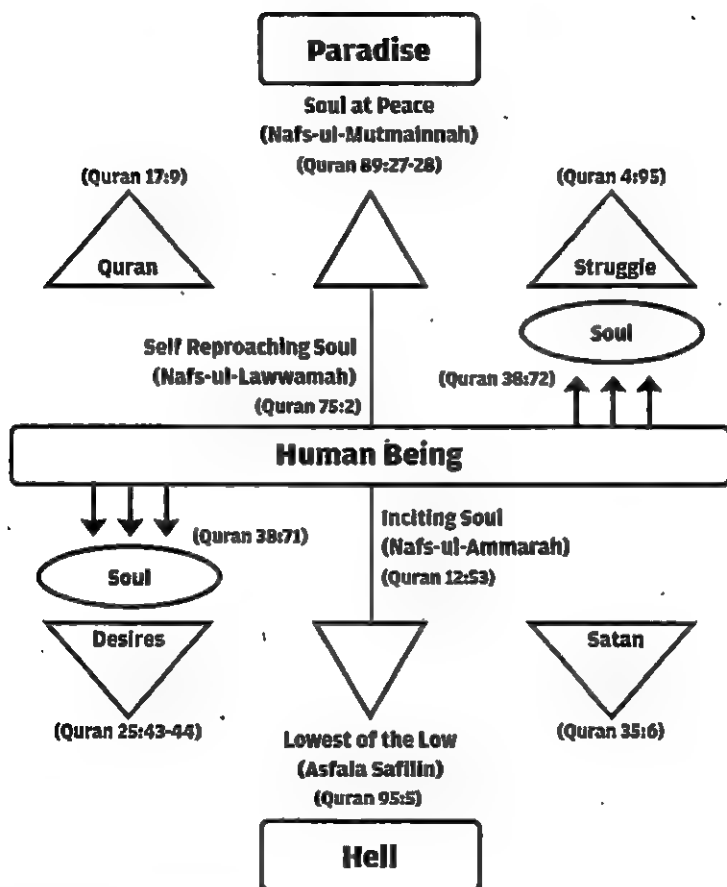
Conclusion

Jihad against the self, is obligatory along with jihad against disbelievers. One cannot strive against the

disbelievers, until one has striven against one's own self. Thus, one should struggle to purify himself throughout his life, so that he can be successful in this life and the hereafter.

The struggle to tilt the heart (from the present restless state) towards the soul should be the aim; if one wants to improve personality. This will lead to perfection, ensuring success in this world and the hereafter.

Good and Evil Tendencies



Introduction

Personality differences are reflected in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. In the study of personality, one tries to understand individual differences; in particular various personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability. Personality differences are seen in

behaviour patterns, cognition and emotion. Personality theorists present their own descriptions based on theoretical positions.

The concept of personality can also be analysed, with reference to influence of good and evil on a person. The concept can be understood in terms of three stages, described by the Qur'an. Janab Ameenul Hasan (Member – Central Advisory Council – Jamaat-e-Islami Hind) has spoken on this topic in his book 'Nafs-ul-Mutmainnah ki Taraf' (Towards a Peaceful Soul).

Creation of Man

Allah says in the Qur'an, "(So mention) when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I am going to create a human being from clay. So, when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My (created) soul, then fall down to him in prostration" (Qur'an 38:71-72). From this verse, we can learn that man was created with two elements; soil and soul. The soil is inferior, it is a part of the earth, thus it pulls the man downwards. This is an easy task, as moving down is easier when compared to moving up. On the other hand, soul is superior; and clean. It is from heavens. It was blown by Allah, thus it always pulls the man upwards. This is a difficult task, as moving up is difficult when compared to moving down.

1. Inciting Soul (Nafs-ul-Ammarah)

The first stage is the 'Inciting Soul' (Nafs-ul-Ammarah). This aspect instigates and motivates an individual towards committing wrong and evil acts. The Qur'an quotes Yousuf; "And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persist entenjoiner of evil, except those upon whom my Lord has mercy.Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an 12:53). The verse narrates the statement of Yusuf (pbuh), when Zuleika (the wife of Aziz) invited him to commit a wrong act. This refers to that nafs, which is ruling over a person. The nafs commands

people and tells them what to do. So, when the nafs is possessed by desire, it accordingly commands a person and it dominates him. The nafs is dominant over the human being, the individual is subjugated by it. A person with such a nafs will commit sin willingly.

This Nafs resides in the world of the senses and is dominated by earthly desires and passions. Evil lies hidden in the Nafs and this leads him to do wrong. If Allah does not save him, the person would be destroyed by evil. If Allah grants him help, then he would survive. One should seek refuge in Allah, both from evil within us and from the evil of our actions.

Some of the major acts caused by Nafs-ul-Ammarah are, anger, ill-will, jealousy, pride, greed, cowardice, idleness, laziness and arrogance.

When Nafs-ul-Ammarah overpowers the individual completely, he obeys Satan and falls prey to his temptations. He falls into the state which is the lowest of the low (Asfala Safilin). Allah says in the Qur'an, "Then We return him to the lowest of the low" (Qur'an 95:5).

Inciting Soul (Nafs-ul-Ammarah) is moved by desire and is tempted by Satan.

i. Desire

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him? Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are not except like cattle. Rather, they are [even] more astray in [their] way" (Qur'an 25: 43-44). The verse refers to the person who takes his low desires (hawa) for his god. Who can bring him out of that condition? Apparently, such persons can hear and are intelligent, so that an observer may think that they are using their hearing and reason. But Allah says; No, they are even worse than cattle, more misguided. This is because cattle do not have ethical sense. These people, despite possessing reason, choose the wrong path. Thus, when one

follows his own desires, they will ultimately lead him to hell.

ii. Satan

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze" (Qur'an 35:6). The verse clearly states that Satan is our open enemy and we need to regard him as our enemy. He is out to tempt people to indulge in wrong acts which will ultimately lead them to hell.

2. Self-Reproaching Soul (Nafs-ul-Lawwamah)

The second stage is 'Self Reproaching Soul' (Nafs-ul-Lawwamah). This nafs motivates an individual towards good and moral acts. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And I swear by the reproaching soul (to the certainty of Resurrection)" (Qur'an 75:2). If a person commits sin, that *nafs* reproaches itself, it feels guilty. Then this guilt is so intense that the person leaves those sins. A person with such a nafs, on committing a sin, feels remorse, regret, and guilt. They feel embarrassment; they wish they could take their conduct back, they wish they never did it. So, they are fighting a battle against evil tendencies. They fall into sin sometimes and they are able to avoid sin at other times.

When the power of 'Self Reproaching Soul' overcomes that of 'Inciting Soul', the human being reaches a stage, which is called 'Soul at Peace' (Nafs-ul-Mutmainnah). Allah says in the Qur'an, "(To the righteous it will be said), O reassured soul. Return to your Lord, well pleased and pleasing (to Him)" (Qur'an 89:27-28). Here *mutma'in* means two things. Firstly, that they are content with the will of Allah. The human being is trained and disciplined in such a way, that he accepts the will of Allah. Second meaning of *mutma'in* is that nafs has reached a state of serenity and peace. It is a state when the individual does not commit sin; he has no evil desires and is only attracted

towards good things. Such a person only desires things that Allah declares as desirable. He has stopped seeking things that Allah has termed undesirable.

In this stage, the individual will experience peace; being satisfied with the will of Allah. Nafs has been purified and trained to obey Allah. Only the servants of Allah who have struggled their whole lives against evil, will reach this stage. This type of nafs now remains engaged in ways to please Allah. This nafs struggles hard to improve itself that Allah will admit it to Paradise on the Day of Judgment. This is the nafs that man should aspire for and request from Allah as it is the final aim of perfection.

Factors contributing towards it are:

i. Qur'an

Allah says in the Qur'an, "This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah" (Qur'an 2:2). "The month of Ramadhan (is that) in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion ..." (Qur'an 2:185). "Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward" (Qur'an 17:9). The above verses state that the Qur'an is guidance and it will guide people to the right path in this world and hereafter.

Prophet has also said, "The Qur'an is an intercessor, given permission to intercede, and it is rightfully believed in. Whoever puts it in front of him, it will lead him to Paradise; whoever puts it behind him, it will steer him to the Hellfire" (At-Tabarani). This hadith clearly tells us that the Qur'an will lead people to paradise.

ii. Struggle

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Not equal are those believers remaining (at home) other than the disabled – and

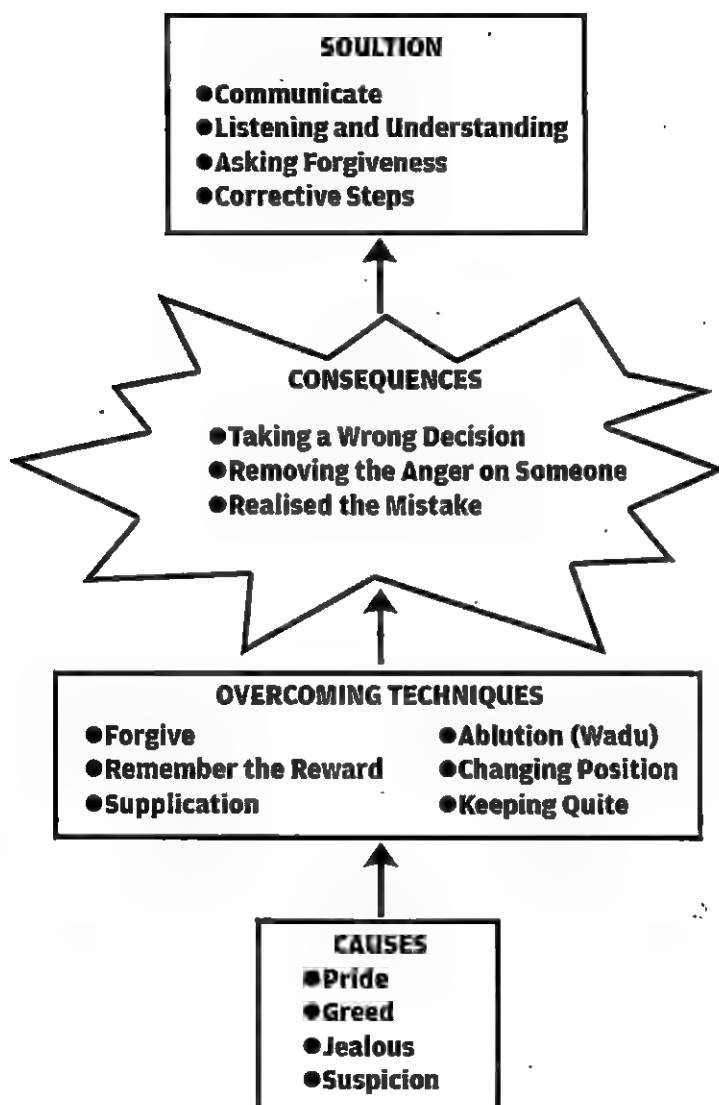
the mujahideen, (who strive and fight) in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred the mujahideen through their wealth and their lives over those who remain (behind), by degrees. And to both Allah has promised the best (reward). But Allah has preferred the mujahideen over those who remain (behind) with a great reward” (Qur’an 4:95). The verse states that the people who struggle in the way of Allah have been promised the best and great reward, which is paradise, where they will stay for ever.

Conclusion

There are two kinds of people. There are those whose Nafs has overcome them and led them to ruin, because they yielded to temptations and obeyed their impulses. The other type of people are those who have overcome their Nafs and have made it obey Allah’s commands. They struggle against evil, to do good deeds, then they move towards peace and tranquillity. When one does evil, then one moves away from tranquillity.

If one wants to improve one’s personality, he should strive to reach the state of ‘Soul at Peace’ (Nafs-ul-Mutmainnah), so that he can be successful in the hereafter. Allah said, “And (by) the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it (with discernment of) its wickedness and its righteousness, He has succeeded who purifies it. And he has failed who instils it (with corruption)” (Qur’an 91:7-10). If one does not make effort to improve one’s personality then he starts moving towards Lowest of the Low (Asfala Safilin) status, which will ultimately lead him to hell fire.

Anger, Cause and Remedy



Introduction

Overcoming anger is important. One should learn methods for temper control and remaining calm and composed. Anger is frequently a result of frustration, of feeling blocked or thwarted from something. Anger can also be a defensive response to underlying fear or feelings of vulnerability or powerlessness. Anger analysts consider anger to be a motivation arising out of an identifiable reason. It may be logically analysed and overcome.

The angry person should identify the root causes which make him angry and try to eliminate them from his life. One should take steps to overcome anger otherwise he would face the negative consequences.

Islam strongly encourages people to control their anger. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Who spend (in the cause of Allah) during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people and Allah loves the doers of good" (Qur'an 3:134). Once, a man said to the Prophet (pbuh), "Give me Advice", the Prophet said, "Do not get angry". The man asked repeatedly and the Prophet answered each time, "Do not get angry" (Bukhari).

The following are the four aspects of anger.

1. Causes

Islam strives to resolve every problem from grass roots. Some of the common causes of anger are mentioned below:

i. Pride

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And do not walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, you will never tear the earth (apart), and you will never reach the mountains in height" (Qur'an 17:37). Islam teaches people to shun pride and arrogance. Overcome by pride, one tends to get angry quickly and anger is due to his sheer ignorance.

ii. Greed

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And let not those who (greedily) withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection. And to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. And Allah, with what you do, is (fully) Acquainted" (Qur'an 3:180). The verse exhorts people not to be greedy. A greedy person would want more and more and his desires would not end. When he does not get what he desires, it would lead him to anger.

iii. Jealousy

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Do not be angry with each other and do not feel jealous towards each other and do not turn away from each other, and be slaves of Allah, brothers. It is not halal for a Muslim to shun his brother for more than three nights" (Malik). Islam puts great importance on harmony among believers. Feelings of bitterness lead to anger and will ultimately lead to strained relationships. It is necessary to keep in mind, their deadly effects and avoid them.

iv. Spying and Suspicion

Allah says in the Qur'an, "O you who have believed, avoid much (negative) assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful" (Qur'an 49:12). When one spies over others, he may know hidden facts about them. He develops a negative attitude towards them and this ultimately leads to anger.

2. Overcoming Anger

Once, Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) said, "Strong is not the one, who throws down another, but the one, who controls his anger" (Bukhari and Muslim). We learn from the hadith that, such a person is not tough who can take his rival down. A strong person is one who manages to overpower negative thoughts. He knows how to acquire correct perception of things. We learn from the hadith that a person who overcomes anger, is strong. Islam advises people not to get angry. It also offers measures to overcome anger. The following are the methods:

i. Forgiveness

The opposite of anger is forbearance. It counts amongst perfect qualities of a human being. A good person is forgiving and merciful, although he may have complete power to take revenge. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Keep to forgiveness, and enjoin what is fair, and turn away from the ignorant" (Qur'an 7:199). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said, "Forgiveness raises a man's station; forgive so that Allah (swt) may honour you".

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... and who restrain anger and who pardon the people and Allah loves the doers of good" (Qur'an 3:134). Once, the maid of Hasan dropped a hot bowl of soup on him. She was very scared because she thought Hasan would be angry and punish her. She immediately recited the verse, "...Those who control (their) anger...". Hasan smiled and said he was not angry. Then she recited the next part of the verse, "...And are forgiving towards people...". Hasan said he had forgiven her. She then finished the verse, "...Allah loves those who do good". Hasan told her she was free. The verse from which she recited, is mentioned above. Thus, the Qur'an teaches us to control anger, forgive the person concerned and do good.

ii. Remember God

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... and who restrain anger and who pardon the people and Allah loves the doers of good" (Qur'an 3:134). Once Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allah will call him before all of mankind on the Day of Resurrection and will let him choose of the Hoor Al-Ayn whoever he wants"(Abu Dawood).

Anger is a feeling that arises from satanic influence. Managing it is a great act of virtue which results in high reward from Allah. Control of negative sentiments is an act approved by Allah. He will grant His rightful servants a high place in Paradise. Thus, one should remember the reward and virtue of patience and forgiveness.

iii. Supplication

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is Hearing and Knowing". (Qur'an 7:200). Once Prophet (pbuh) was sitting and two men were slandering one another. One of them was red in the face, and the veins on his neck were standing out. The Prophet said, "I know a word which, if he were to say it, what he feels would go away. If he said, I seek refuge with Allah from the Satan, what he feels (i.e., his anger) would go away".

One must know that Islam is a religion of tranquillity and harmony which exhorts its followers to adopt such manners which portray its true essence. A human being by nature is peaceful and loving, but still sometimes, we get feelings of hate and anger towards others. This is because Satan is man's direct and open enemy who manipulates different kinds of circumstances and encourages man to act irresponsibly.

iv. Ablution (Wadu)

Ablution can also be a shield against anger. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created from fire, and fire is extinguished only with water. So, when one of you becomes angry, he should make wudu".

v. Changing Posture

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said, "If anger arouses anyone, he should sit down and if that does not help, he should lie down" (Tirmidhi).

vi. Keeping Quiet

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "If one of you becomes angry then he should stay silent". This is an important practice; because when we are angry, our actions and speech may be disproportionate and unjust.

3. Consequences

When an individual is not able to overcome anger, he is likely to indulge in negative behaviour. The consequences are mentioned below:

i. Taking a Wrong Decision

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And when Musa returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, "How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after (my departure). Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?" And he threw down the tablets" (Qur'an 7:150). From this verse, we learn that an angry person may take a wrong decision.

ii. Expressing Anger inappropriately

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... And seized his brother by (the hair of) his head, pulling him toward him..." (Qur'an 7:150). Prophet Musa saw people indulging in

wrong acts. He got angry on Prophet Harun, as he had given Haroon the responsibility to take care of the people.

We learn that when one gets angry, he tends to express his anger, sometimes inappropriately.

iii. Realising the Mistake

When the anger of Musa came down, he picked up the tablets (Qur'an in 7:151 and 7:154).

An individual should always try avoid anger. Action which an individual takes while angry, tends to be wrong. He takes wrong decisions and expresses his anger inappropriately. Later he regrets his hasty actions. A grain of patience in the moment of anger, will always save us from regret at a later stage.

4. Solution

When one fails to overcome anger, one faces the negative consequences mentioned above. The Qur'an guides people to constructive activities which would help them overcome the negative consequences. The following are the various activities suggested:

i. Communication

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... (Harun) said, "O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people"" (Qur'an 7:150). From this verse, we learn that on encountering anger, the other party should communicate and explain the real situation to them. When Prophet Musa was angry then Prophet Harun explained the situation to him.

ii. Listening and Understanding

When Prophet Harun explained to Prophet Musa about what had happened during his absence, Prophet Musa listened to him and understood his version. He realized that his brother did his best, by asking people to abstain from

evil. But the people over powered him and were about to kill him. He found himself helpless. This explanation helped Prophet Musa understand, what had really happened in his absence. It also contributed to his anger cooling down.

iii. Seeking Forgiveness

Allah says in the Qur'an, "(Musa) said, 'My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy, for You are the most merciful of the merciful'" (Qur'an 7:151). From this verse, we learn that one should pray to God seeking forgiveness, which is what Prophet Musa did.





iv. Corrective Steps

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And Musa chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment ..." (Qur'an 7:155). From this verse, we learn that Prophet Musa chose seventy men from amongst his people and took them to Mount Tur for begging forgiveness from Allah for their sin, which they had committed by worshiping the calf.

Conclusion

Anger is a psychological condition, and cause of evil and aggressive actions. One who does not control one's anger, loses control over one's mind. The individual cannot control his actions and will harm and hurt himself and others as well. An individual should have a strong will, not to get angry. When he sees evil, he should try to initiate reform. Anger is unfruitful. It needs to be controlled, in order to succeed in this world and in the hereafter. Controlling anger is to be emotional intelligent.

Four Quadrant Personality Analysis

<div>2</div> <div>Careless</div> <div></div> <div>Date</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Ignorant</div> <div></div> <div>Colocynth</div>
<div>1</div> <div>Knowledgeable</div> <div></div> <div>Citron</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Hypocrites</div> <div></div> <div>Basil</div>

No Quran

Quran

Disbelief

Belief

Introduction

Islam is holistic guidance that impacts all areas of life. A Muslim should strive to develop a strong body, good character and cultured mind. He should be able to earn a living, have correct belief, and worship Allah alone. He should control his desires, be careful about his time, organize his affairs, and remain beneficial to those around him. This is the personality of a Muslim. People may be categorized in four ways, with reference to their knowledge and belief.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “The similitude of a believer who recites the Qur’an is like that of a citron (a fruit which looks like a lemon with a thick aromatic rind), whose fragrance is beautiful and whose taste is good. The similitude of a believer who does not recite the Qur’an is like a date; it tastes good but has no fragrance. The similitude of a disbeliever who recites the Qur’an is like that of the basil, it has a beautiful fragrance but tastes bitter. The similitude of a disbeliever who does not recite the Qur’an is like that of the colocynth (also known as the bitter apple), it tastes bitter and has no fragrance...” (Abu Dawood).

The classification demonstrates the high rank of a believer and the loftiness of his deeds. It exposes the despicable level of a sinner and baseness of his deeds. The hadith divides people into four categories.

1. Citron – Knowledgeable

The people who fall under the first quadrant are those who have belief in Allah, who have knowledge of the Qur’an and do justice to it. Allah says in the Qur’an, “Those to whom We have given the Book recite it with a true recital. They (are the ones who) believe in it ...” (Qur’an 2:121). The verse means that the true believers are the ones who do justice to the Qur’an; they do justice by reciting it, pondering over it and completely applying its teaching in their lives. This can only be done when one has

strong belief in Allah. Thus, they are considered as knowledgeable people.

2. Date

The people who fall under the second quadrant are those who believe in Allah but fail to do justice with the Qur'an.

3. Basil – Hypocrites

The people who fall under the third quadrant are those who do not believe though they read the Qur'an. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And it has already come down to you in the Book (i.e., the Qur'an) that when you hear the verses of Allah (recited), they are denied (by them) and ridiculed; so, do not sit with them until they enter into another conversation. Indeed, you would then be like them. Indeed, Allah will gather the hypocrites and disbelievers in Hell all together" (Qur'an 4:140). The verse states that the Qur'an has been revealed for people and they ought to acquire knowledge of the Qur'an. They hide their disbelief in their hearts when they reject the message of the Qur'an. Thus, they are hypocrites.

4. Colocynth – Ignorant

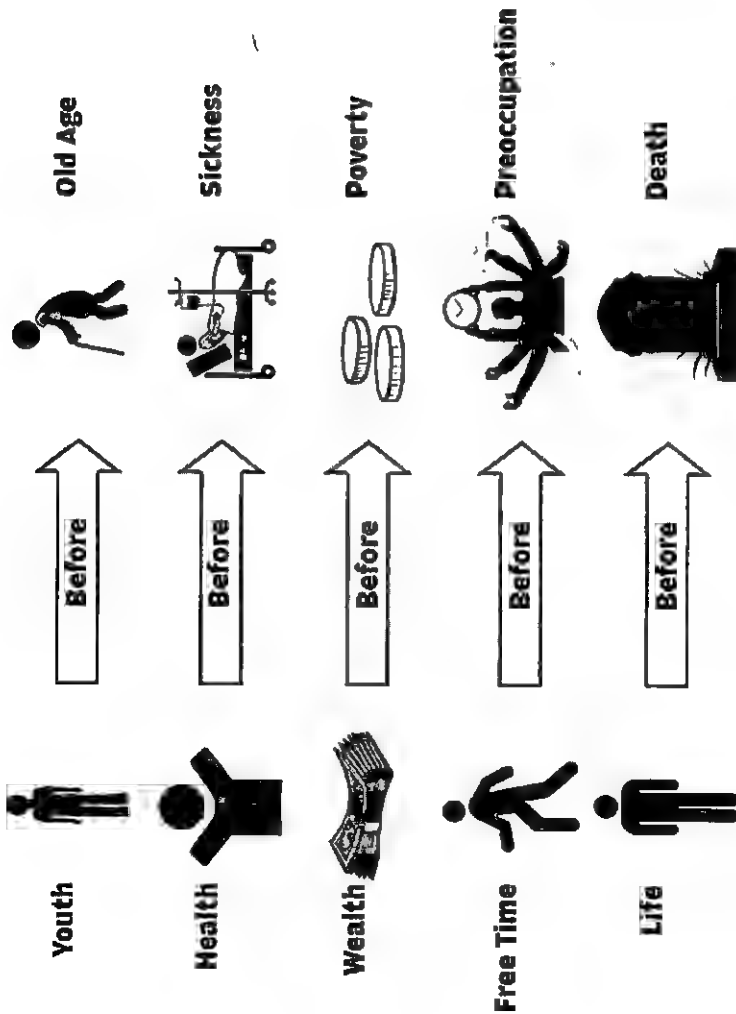
The people who fall under the fourth quadrant are those who neither have belief nor do justice to the Qur'an. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And those who disbelieve say, "Do not listen to this Qur'an and speak noisily during (the recitation of) it that perhaps you will overcome" (Qur'an 41:26). The verse speaks about three important things. Firstly, the disbelievers tell others not to listen to the Qur'an, secondly, they make noise when the Qur'an is recited so that the message does not reach them and thirdly, they also do not listen to the message of the Qur'an. Thus, they are considered as people with ignorance.

Conclusion

The fourth quadrant is considered to be the most negative one. The first is considered to be the most positive. However, the first two categories are fortunate as they are believers. In order to develop one's personality, one should avoid the fourth quadrant and move to first quadrant. If the person is in the first quadrant, he is considered to be close to Allah and the Qur'an.

Belief in Allah and the Qur'an are sources of light which Allah places in whoever's heart He wills. They are the basis of good. Belief in Allah and the Qur'an moves people out of darkness and brings them to light.

Five opportunities before Five Contingencies



Introduction

Self-management broadly involves three fields; personal, social and environmental. Personal domain consists of soul, mind and body. Social realm includes family and friends. Environment consists of home and work. Self-management involves planning, organising and 70ulfil70ce70g time and resources. One needs to focus one's efforts in the right direction in order to be productive and effective. Some people seem to be born with strong self-management skills; others have to work to develop them. Some have more opportunities to use these skills, while others have to rely on help from teachers, family and friends. An individual with good self-management skills will be able to manage his personal, social and work life effectively.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Take benefit of five before five, your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your leisure before your preoccupation, and your life before your death" (Hakim). The hadith instructs people to make use of the five bounties, their youth, health, wealth, time and life, which Allah has given them.

This hadith can be understood as guidance on self-management. One has to manage five important resources of his life, which are given to him by Allah. If managed effectively, the success of the person would be guaranteed in this world and the hereafter. The following are important aspects of the concept:

1. Youth before Old Age

One of the things that most people take for granted is their youth. When people are young, they are full of energy and are capable of doing so many things. But often their energies are wasted. They are not rightly channelized. When young, we should use energy to help others while we can. There are so many ways in which we can benefit others.

When people lose their youth, they inevitably find it harder to do good deeds and perform acts of worship. Such acts were easier at a younger age.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Every Muslim has to give charity". The people asked, "O Allah's Prophet, if someone has nothing to give, what should he do?" He replied, "He should work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity (from what he earns)". The people further asked, "If he cannot do even that?". He replied, "He should help the one needing help". Then the people asked, "If he cannot do that?". He replied, "Then he should perform all that is good (i.e. enjoin what is just) and keep away from all that is evil and these will be regarded as charitable deeds" (Bukhari). Thus, one should use his youth in doing good and making effective utilisation of energy.

2. Health before Sickness

We should take advantage of good health before we are overcome with illness or disability. What we often don't realise is that our health is a blessing from Allah. When we are in good health, we take it for granted and don't always appreciate what we have. It is only when we fall ill that we realise its worth. We should have performed good acts, while we could.

Examples of acts of worship not performed due to poor health are Fasting and Hajj. When people are young and can fast, they don't make efforts to keep the non-obligatory fast. People also do not think of performing Hajj when they have good health. They postpone it. In old age, they are not able to do justice to all aspects of Hajj.

We need to be aware of the fact that there is no guarantee of our good health. There are so many things that can lead to sickness. We should take advantage of what we have. One should thank Allah for good health and plan its effective utilization.

3. Wealth before Poverty

Wealth is another blessing granted to us by Allah. Wealth in this context, does not necessarily mean possession of large savings or a huge house or a branded car. The simpler things, such as a roof over our heads, clothes to wear and food to eat, make us amongst the world's wealthiest people. There are millions of people in the world today that don't even have a drop of clean water to drink. They don't know where their next meal will come from. These are the ones that we should help with our wealth. Even a small donation can go a long way.

We should give as much as we can in the way of Allah and we are assured of the reward from Allah. Allah says, "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed (of grain) which grows seven spikes; in each spike are hundred grains. And Allah multiplies (His reward) for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing" (Qur'an 2:261). Thus, one should try his best to give as much as he can. One does not know when Allah will take away the bounty of wealth from him through calamity, accident or loss.

4. Leisure before Preoccupation

Islam always encourages us to make the most of our time and spend it in the way of Allah. We should utilise available time to do good. Before we know it, this time will have passed. As mentioned above, we should use the time we have in our youth, to strive in the way of Allah. As time passes, we get weaker and older.

As a person grows older, he tends to become busier. He needs to worry about work, assets, health, home and family. This aspect of time is so important that Allah cites time as witness in Surah Al Asar. We need to discipline ourselves by giving importance to time. Thus, one should consider time to be a precious resource. Allah would question us about it on the day of Judgement.

5. Life before Death

The last thing that we have been advised to take advantage of, is our life before our death. Every night when we go to sleep, we enter a state where our soul leaves us. When we wake up, it is only because Allah has blessed us by returning our souls and granting us further opportunity to worship Him. Upon waking up in the morning, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used to say, "Praise be to Allah who gave me life after death, and to Him is the final return" (Bukhari).

Often, we do not fully appreciate how great a blessing another chance is. We ignore death, and don't fully appreciate that at some point (and only Allah knows when) our life will be taken away from us. There will not be any second chance or opportunity to make up for the wrongs we have done. We must not forget what a mercy life is. We should use it to our best advantage. This means doing good to please Allah in order to achieve our ultimate goal, which is Paradise.

Conclusion

We need to strive to achieve good results, day in and day out. Whether we are studying or working, we should excel at what we do. We know that we have to work hard to achieve success. Paradise is no exception to this. If we strive hard enough, then surely Allah will reward us with the ultimate prize.

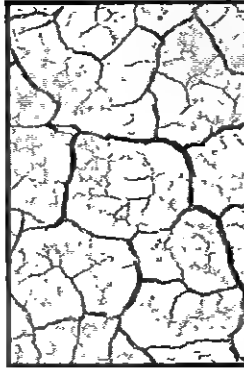
Prophet (pbuh) said, "A man shall be asked concerning five things on the Day of Resurrection, concerning his life, how he spent it; concerning his youth, how he grew old; concerning his wealth, how he acquired it and how he spent it; and what he did with the knowledge he had" (Tirmidhi). So, if one has done justice to the above mentioned five important resources, then answering these questions would be possible.

Youth, health, wealth, free time and life are five important bounties, which are given by Allah to man. If

man understands their importance and uses them effectively then he has made a wise move and his life journey would be in the right direction. Using them effectively would not only lead him to peace and tranquillity in this world but also smoothly lead him to paradise in the hereafter.

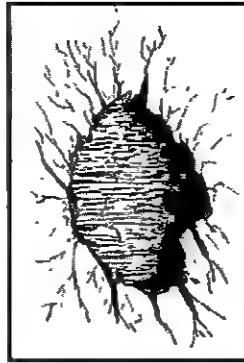
Land and Heart Parable

Type 'C'
Unfortunate and Worthless



**Neither retain water
nor produce vegetation**

Type 'B'
Custodian of Knowledge



**Dry with a solid bed that
preserves the rain water**

Type 'A'
Intelligent



**Absorbs water and
produces vegetation
and grass**

Introduction

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "An example of the guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is that of a rain that falls on different kinds of lands. One land is good; it accepts water and produces vegetation and grass in plenty. Another kind of land is dry with a solid bed that preserves the rain water so that people can drink and irrigate from it. The third kind of land is porous that can neither retain water nor produce vegetation. This is the example of those who acquire knowledge of the religion and benefit from that which Allah sent me with, and of those who do not take heed and insist on rejecting Allah's Guidance" (Bukhari).

Prophet Muhammad compares the knowledge of Islam to rain, because both are sources of life. Rain is the cause of life for the body, while knowledge is the cause of life for the heart. Just as there are three kinds of land, there are also three kinds of hearts. This is a way of understanding the personality of a human being. The personalities in the concept are categorized as 'Type A', 'Type B' and 'Type C'. They are as follows:

Types

The following are the various types of personalities:

1. Type 'A' Personality: Intelligent

The first is fertile land which accepts water and is ready to produce vegetation. When rain falls on it, it absorbs the water eagerly, giving rise to all sorts of pleasant vegetation. This is the example of a healthy, pure, and intelligent heart, which embraces knowledge, is guided by its intelligent nature, and thus blossoms into wisdom and faith. It is eager to take knowledge, and ready to bear fruits. It is like a competent businessman who has experience and knowledge, which enables him to invest his wealth profitably.

They are the people who have knowledge, practice it and convey it. The person is equivalent to a good land which absorbs water, benefits itself, causes vegetation to grow forth and thus benefit others with it. They are the ones who have intelligence, who invite others to truth and who practice good deeds.

2. Type 'B' Personality: Custodian of Knowledge

The second kind of land is hard. It can hold water as a reservoir does and water can be used for drinking or irrigation. This is the example of the heart that preserves knowledge so as to convey it accurately to others. This person may not derive much benefit from the knowledge himself. He is like a rich man who does not invest his wealth and increase it, but who knows how to preserve it.

They are the people who have acquired knowledge. After seeking knowledge, they pass on knowledge to others. They would remember and transfer the knowledge. Such a person is equivalent to a land in which water is stored and so people are able to benefit from it. He is a person who listens to the Qur'an and memorizes it. He then conveys it just as he heard it.

3. Type 'C' Personality: Unfortunate and Worthless

The third kind of land is barren. It is incapable of producing vegetation or even holding water. No matter how much rain falls on it, it does not benefit by it. This is the example of the heart that does not accept knowledge or wisdom at all.

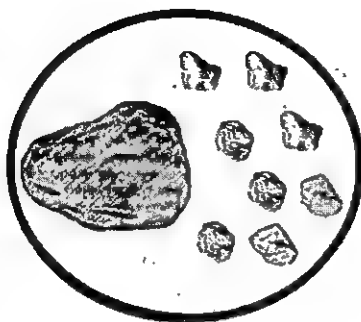
They are the people who listen to knowledge being imparted but they neither memorize it, nor convey it to others. They are the unfortunate and worthless ones. They do not learn to be custodians of knowledge; they do not memorize anything nor understand the truth. They have not accepted the guidance of Allah but rather they have turned away from it.

Conclusion

The first type of personality refers to a learned man who imparts knowledge, and who calls people to Allah with clear guidance; such are the followers of Prophets. The second type of personality refers to a person who preserves knowledge and transmits what he hears precisely; he carries to other people precious goods that they can use for trade and investment. The third type of personality refers to one who neither accepts Allah's guidance nor benefits from it. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mentioned the first two personalities together as they are the ones from whom people learn. They are worth praising. Thus, one should strive to possess 'Type A' personality, or 'Type B'. One should avoid falling in the 'Type C' 78ulfil78c.

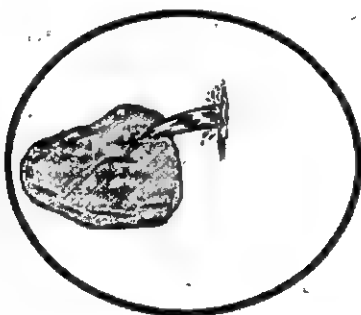
Rock and Heart Parable

Type 3
Obedient



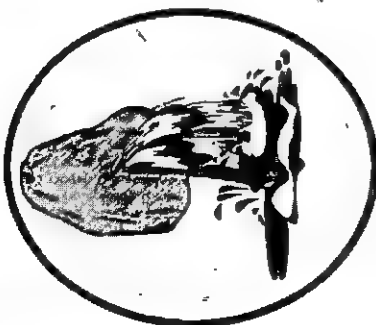
Repentant Heart
(Rocks that Fall Out of
Fear of Allah)

Type 2
Late Acceptance



Eligible Heart
(Crack Open and
Water is Found)

Type 1
Immediate Acceptance



Sound Heart
(Rivers Gush Forth)

(Quran 2:74)

Introduction

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do" (Qur'an 2:74). The discussion here is about Jews. The story of Musa and water gushing from the rock is familiar to Jews. Allah used the example that resonates with them. In this verse, Allah gave the example of three types of rocks. Rocks in the parable refer to hearts; water is used often in the Qur'an to represent purity and faith.

The three rocks in the verse are three types of personalities. This helps us in framing a concept of personality. The 'Rock' is considered as the 'Heart' and the 'Water' is considered as 'Faith' (Iman) in the concept. The first type of rock is such that rivers gush forth from it. The second type of rocks are those which crack open and water is found and the third type of rock falls out of fear of Allah. Let us try to understand the three types of personalities of people, in accordance with this verse:

1. Sound Heart (Rivers Gush Forth)

This personality is one which is deeply reflective, thinking about the purpose of life, asking deep questions about the reality of existence. When the solution is brought to them and it clicks, there is no hesitation. There is an excitement, just like a rock that is source of rivers. Water inside the rock is faith inside the heart. This person had faith and his instinct was looking for some sign to confirm it. Revelation came; it clicks with what was already inside and the faith just gushes forth like a river. The best example in Islamic history is Abu Bakar, a person who accepted the truth without hesitation when it came to him.

The heart of the person in this category is the purest. It is sound heart that noble people will bring before Allah, on the Day of Judgment. Allah says in the Qur'an, "The Day

when there will not benefit (anyone) wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart" (Qur'an 26:88-89).

2. Eligible Heart (Cracks Open and Water is Found)

This personality is one which is active. The purpose of life is not something that they often think about. They just do too many activities to worry about deep questions. They have water inside but they need strong motivation to bring it out in open. Demise of a friend or a family member may start them thinking. These are people who do not accept Islam immediately, but a particular incident like sudden loss or trauma, may crack open the rock (that is the heart) and underneath it is Iman (water).

The example of a person from Islamic history is Umar, who was a very active person. Once during the night, he was hiding behind the cloth of the Kaaba and was planning to harm the Prophet (pbuh). When Prophet started to recite the Qur'an, he listened. After some time, he was shaken and ran away but did not accept Islam. Later when his sister embraced Islam, he went to her house, furious with her. He struck her across the face. Seeing blood streaming from the face of his sister, he softened and the rock cracked. He read the Qur'an and then eventually became a Muslim. That traumatic experience was enough for him to grasp the truth and his heart opened so he accepted Islam. With some people, one cannot expect results in a day or two but we need to wait. Umar and Hamza took six years to accept Islam.

When consciousness is awakened in such a heart, it responds and then life changes completely from there on.

3. Repentant Heart

(Rocks that Fall Out of Fear of Allah)

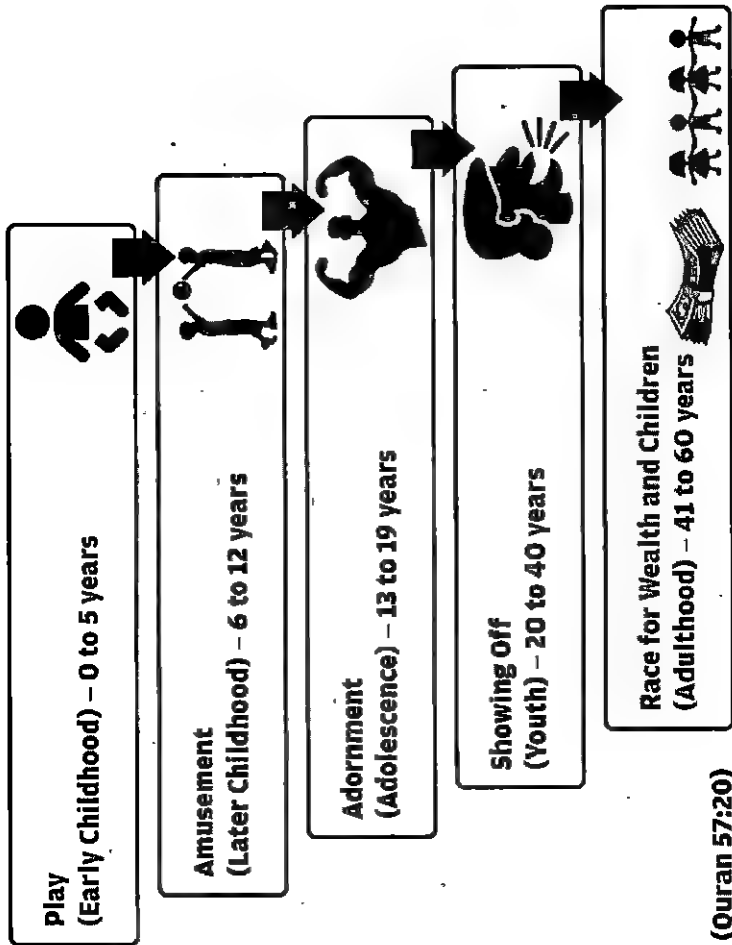
This personality type comprises of people who normally do not reflect. He is led to faith (Iman) as he fears Allah. He observes all his obligations, though he may not experience deep Faith. These people may not reach spiritual peak but can at least 'feel' the fear of Allah.

It is heart which fears Allah. It may not taste the higher quality of Faith (Iman). The mind and the intellect have submitted to Allah.

Conclusion

The three kinds of rocks talked about, are three kinds of hearts which have potential. When we are inviting people to Islam, we should remember that people will fall in one of these categories. They may immediately accept the invitation; they may wait for an event to awaken them or they may follow Islam but do not taste the higher quality of faith. Thus, one should have utmost patience and should try to understand the personality of the person, when inviting him to Islam.

Stages of Worldly Life



Introduction

Many people think that they can lead a perfect life in this world. With enough material possessions, they will experience total personal satisfaction and happiness. According to popular opinion, a person's life will be perfect when he has acquired material wealth, got married suitably, has earned respect in society and has well-established career. But the Qur'an presents a completely different view of the world's reality.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Know that the life of this world is but play and amusement and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children, like the example of a rain whose (resulting) plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes (scattered) debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion" (Qur'an 57:20).

The verse describes the reality of the worldly life and its transitory nature. The verse depicts life journey of a human being. The Qur'an describes five different stages. They are as follows:

1. Play (Early Childhood) – 0 to 5 years

The Arabic word used in the Qur'an for this stage is 'la'ib', which refers to play. It is a stage which is referred to as game or sport, meant for amusement and enjoyment. It may serve also some other subsidiary purpose like physical exercise. The earlier stage of one's life is generally spent in amusement. It is an activity that diverts the mind from serious concerns.

2. Amusement (Later Childhood) – 6 to 12 years

The Arabic word used in the Qur'an for this stage is 'lahw', which refers to meaningless play. It is a stage which refers to the act that has no serious purpose, like the games

of children. It is a state or experience when the child finds everything enjoyable. It is basically a stage of entertainment. In this stage, the child is not really mature.

3. Adornment (Adolescence) – 13 to 19 years

It is a stage where people want to beautify themselves. They may visit the gym to get a perfect body. They wear branded clothes and footwear and eat diverse cuisines in famous restaurants. They like to possess branded watches, bikes and cars. They are lured by glamour, fashion and luxuries. They are busy in taking selfies and photos and posting them on various social networking platforms. This stage can also be called as the show-off stage, where a person seeks appreciation and acceptance in society. This stage is also known as the teenage.

4. Boasting to One Another (Youth) – 20 to 40 years

It is a stage where one is tempted to prove his superiority over his mates by making boastful claims. In this stage, the individual will glorify himself by demonstrating certain qualities which he possesses. He boasts about his wealth and rank in society, and his ancestral nobility. He claims his superiority by reason of honours bestowed on him, due to memorable deeds and qualities. One does all this to claim prestige in society.

5. Race for Wealth and Children (Adulthood) – 41 to 60 years

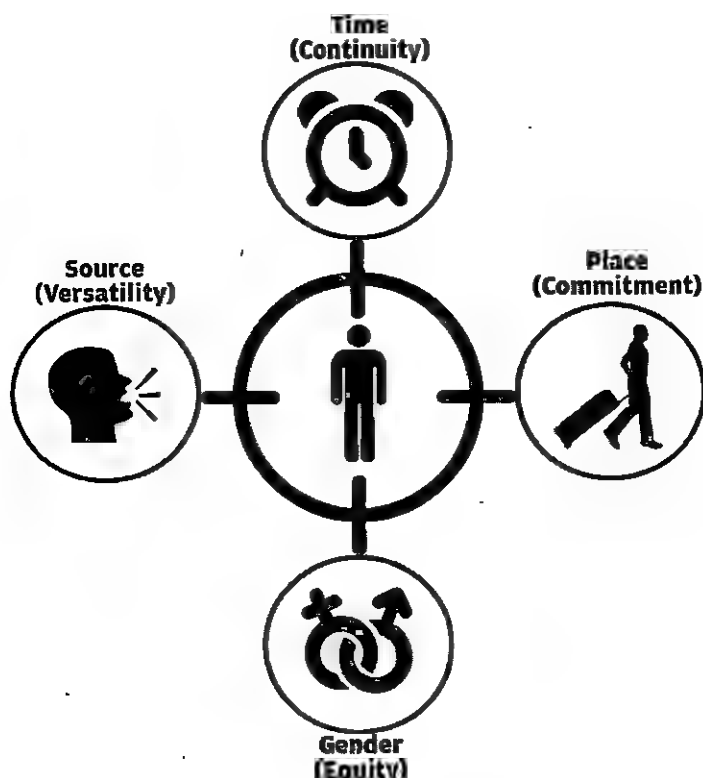
In this state, the individual is mature. He competes with others in wealth and glamorous career of children. He is in competition with his neighbours, siblings, relatives, friends and others. He tries to achieve more than others. He would want a branded car, or a glamorous house, because others in his circle have them.

Conclusion

The analysis helps us understand the reality of life. It describes how a person generally spends his time in this world. It opens our eyes to the truth about life. Its adornments and distractions are alluring but deceptive in nature; they may divert our attention from the Hereafter. We assume that all this glitter will last forever; when in fact, everything on this earth will turn to dust as Allah has promised.

Through this analysis, one realizes that the world is temporary. One should not waste time only in play, amusement, boasting and amassing wealth. The entire wealth of the world and its kingdom is insignificant. Rather, one should focus on attaining Allah's pleasure and seek His forgiveness, which would lead to success in the hereafter, where he would abide forever.

Matrix of Knowledge Acquisition



Introduction

Importance of knowledge in Islam is not disputed. The training of mind is not complete without knowledge. Knowledge equips man to think. It helps in making decisions. Man is capable of getting information from the external world. He may acquaint himself with past history and receive information regarding the present. Without knowledge, man is in darkness. With knowledge, he finds himself in a room with windows open.

From the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) with respect to education, we can extract four important insights. They are as follows:

1. Time

Prophet Muhamad (pbuh) said, "Seek knowledge from the Cradle to the Grave". Through these words we can understand that the Prophet encouraged seeking knowledge from the time we enter this world till we depart from it.

The hadith states that we should remain a 'student' throughout our lives. We will never be able to learn everything and so we will be constantly learning something new. Man can never gain complete knowledge of everything, so he needs to seek knowledge continuously till he dies. The learning attitude will keep the person away from pride.

2. Place

Prophet Muhamad (pbuh) said, "Seek knowledge even if it is as far as China" (Bayhaqi). Through this hadith, Prophet Muhammad is informing us that acquiring knowledge may require us to travel to different places. We should not restrict ourselves to our regular environment. (Some scholars have commented on the authenticity of the hadith.)

The hadith actually refers to effort needed to get knowledge. Travelling a great distance may be required to acquire knowledge.

In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever travels a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise" (Muslim). In this hadith, Prophet has encouraged people to travel in order to seek knowledge. He has promised them paradise for the effort. When one works hard to gain knowledge, he tends to appreciate its worth. One strives to implement it and share it with others, which ultimately makes his path to paradise easy.

3. Gender

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Seeking of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim" (Ibn Majah). Through this hadith, the Prophet is informing us that to correctly practice religion, one should get knowledge. We all, men and women have to make efforts to acquire knowledge; which may be beneficial in this world and the hereafter. In gaining knowledge, Prophet does not discriminate among males and females but gives equal importance to both.

4. Sources

Abu Huraira reported, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, he should take it wherever he finds it." (Tirmidhi). Here the Prophet is telling us to take beneficial knowledge from every source. Importance is given not to the speaker; but to the words spoken.

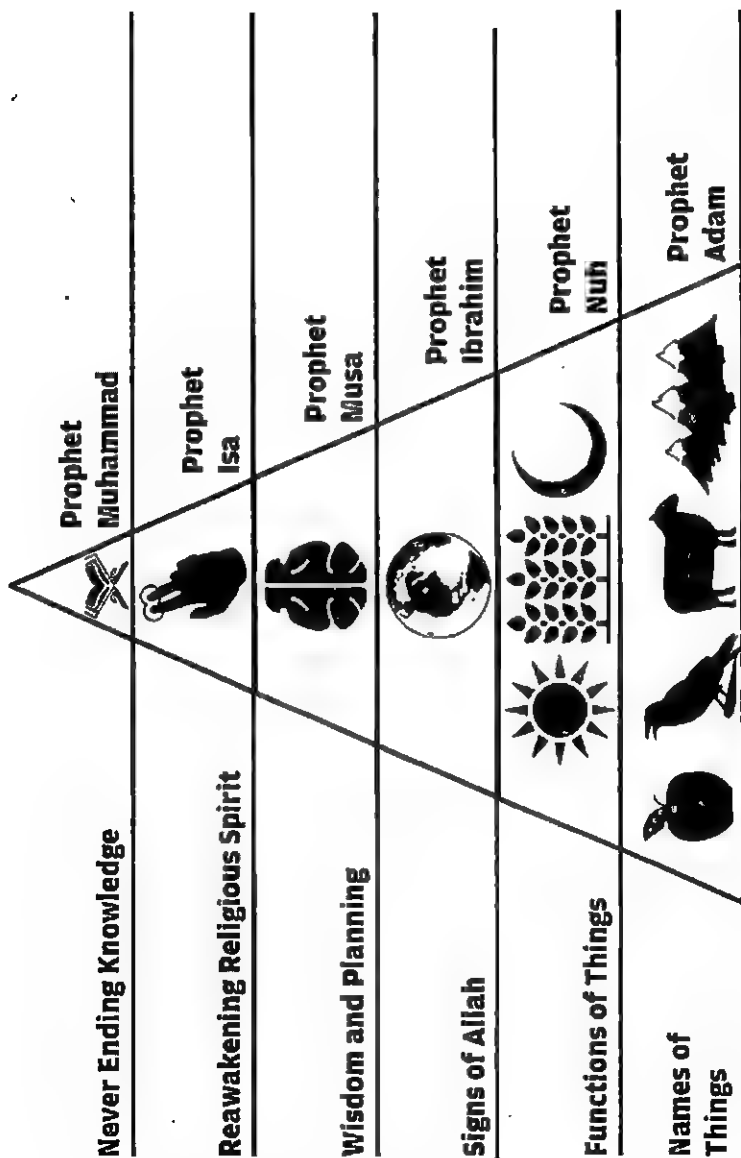
This can be understood with the help of an example from the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). After the battle of Badar, the enemies were prisoners. In an effort to turn this liability into great asset, the Prophet announced that any of these war prisoners who was willing to teach Muslims, to read and write, would be freed. The captives were told to teach at least 10 people to be freed. These services were accepted instead of ransom money. This is a clear testimony to the special attention given by the Prophet to knowledge and literacy.

Conclusion

The prime goal of every Muslim should be to gain knowledge, irrespective of age, effort required, gender or source of knowledge. If one gains knowledge then one will understand life and the world better. Acquiring knowledge makes a person fear Allah. Allah says, "And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colours similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in

Might and Forgiving" (Qur'an 35:28). Acquiring knowledge will take a person closer to Allah as Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever seeks a way to acquire knowledge, Allah will make easy his way to Paradise" (Muslim).

Knowledge and Continuous Growth



Introduction

Allah created man and provided him with tools for acquiring knowledge, namely hearing, sight and wisdom. Islam is the religion of knowledge. The religion has made seeking knowledge incumbent upon all Muslims and one may not ignore this obligation. Prophet (pbuh) once said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim" (Tirmidhi). This obligation is not limited to certain sections; it is as much an obligation on women as on men, be they young or old, poor or rich.

In Islam, knowledge is not considered to be static; it keeps on growing with time. When we deeply analyse the life of Prophets in the Qur'an, Allah has imparted knowledge to all of them. We can understand this by categorizing knowledge at six different levels.

1. Names of Things: Prophet Adam

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And He taught Adam the names, all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful". They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise". He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names". And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen (aspects) of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed" (Qur'an 2:31-33).

When man came into the world, he had no knowledge, he knew nothing. Allah taught man the names of things. Thus, the first form of knowledge, imparted by Allah, was the knowledge of names. Some commentators have also explained that Allah taught Adam language, as people needed a language to communicate. Some other commentators have written that Allah taught Adam about great men who would arise among Adam's progeny and would do good deeds (probably the Prophets).

2. Functions of Things: Prophet Nuh

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Do you not consider how Allah has created seven heavens in layers. And made the moon therein a (reflected) light and made the sun a burning lamp? And Allah has caused you to grow from the earth a (progressive) growth. Then He will return you into it and extract you (another) extraction. And Allah has made for you the earth an expanse. That you may follow therein roads of passage" (Qur'an 71:15-20).

From these verses, we learn that Allah taught Nuh about the features of various things created by him. Allah taught that heavens were created with seven layers, the moon gives away reflected light, the sun is like a burning lamp and earth was created, so that people could grow crops and could easily walk on it.

3. Signs of Allah: Prophet Ibrahim

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And thus did We show Ibrahim the realm of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain (in faith)" (Qur'an 6:75).

From the verse, we learn that Allah taught Prophet Ibrahim about the function of the universe. Thus, we can see that Prophet Ibrahim referred to signs in the universe when he invited his people and the ruler of his time, to truth. The conversation of Prophet Ibrahim and his people is recorded in 6:76-79 and 41:37. The conversation of Prophet Ibrahim and the ruler (Namrud) is recorded in 2:258. From this, we can learn that knowledge was used by Prophet Ibrahim to propagate the religion.

4. Wisdom: Musa

Allah taught Prophet Musa wisdom, which is considered the highest level of knowledge. Allah taught Musa aspects of wisdom, through Khizer. The story of Prophet Musa meeting Prophet Khizer is mentioned in Surah Kahaf.

When Prophet Musa was travelling with Khizer, Khizer damaged a ship, killed a boy and restored a wall. Musa was shocked and did not understand the rationale of such actions. He later realised that if the ship was not damaged, then the king would have seized it. If the boy was not killed then he would grow up to become an unruly disbeliever. If the wall was not constructed then someone would take away the treasure which belonged to the two orphans. From this, Prophet Musa learned wisdom which people do not normally possess.

5. Knowledge of Divine majesty: Isa

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... And (remember) when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay (what was) like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind (from birth) and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission ..." (Qur'an 5:110).

Life and death, illness and cure, are in the control of Allah; He gave this knowledge to Isa. With Allah's permission, Isa showed many miracles.

6. Comprehensive Knowledge: Prophet Muhammad(pbuh)

Allah says in the Qur'an, "The Most Merciful, taught the Qur'an, created man, (And) taught him eloquence" (Qur'an 55:1-4). "And they do not come to you with an example (i.e., argument) except that We bring you the truth and the best explanation" (Qur'an 25:33). From these verses, we learn that Allah has taught Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an.

The knowledge of the Qur'an is so intense that even the mountain would not be able to bear its burden. As Allah says in the Qur'an, "If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and splitting

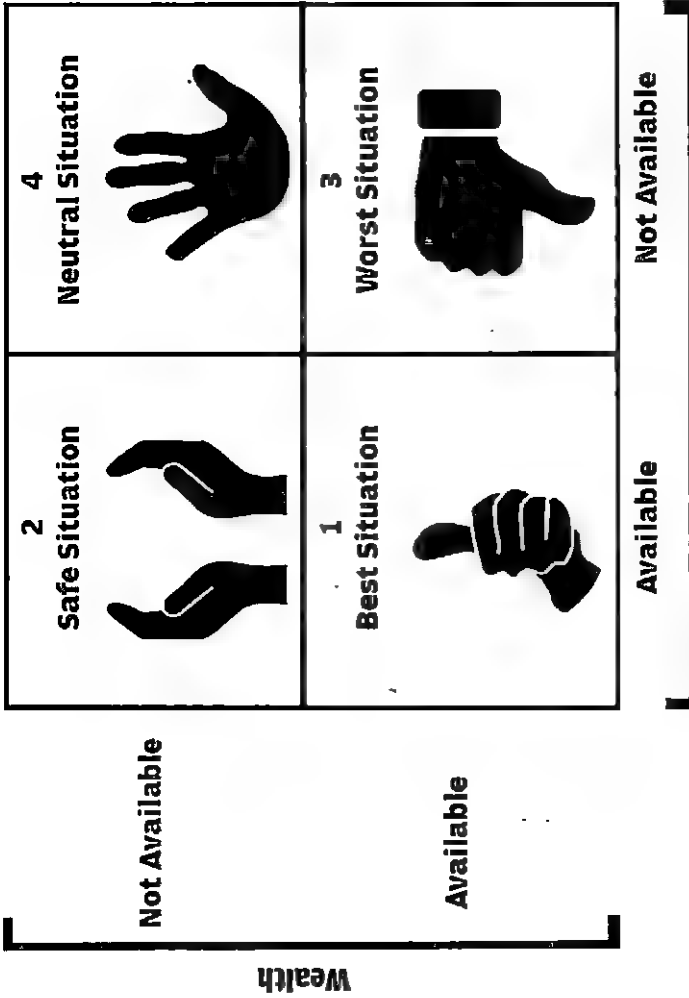
from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought" (Qur'an 59:21).

The knowledge of the Qur'an is unique knowledge which no other source or book in the world can offer. Qur'an is a book which speaks about the past, present and future. People have studied the Qur'an and were successful in discovering new principles and insights. Ultimately, the knowledge of the Qur'an is never-ending.

Conclusion

As time has passed, knowledge has grown. Knowledge of religion was given to Prophets, to guide people. To Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Qur'an, was revealed. It is filled with deep wisdom. Thus, Allah says in the Qur'an, "Will they not then ponder upon the Qur'an or are there locks upon their hearts?" (Qur'an 47:24). Allah has preserved the Qur'an; it is safe from any kind of manipulation or intervention. Learners can derive lessons from the book, which offers never-ending knowledge and wisdom to the entire mankind.

Wealth, Knowledge and Personality



Introduction

Wealth and Knowledge are two important resources. They need to be considered as two significant bounties of Allah. If one possesses them and utilises them in the right manner, he would be successful in this world and the hereafter. If he does not utilize them effectively then he would fail in this world and the hereafter as well.

Abu Kabsha reported, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), said, "I will narrate a saying to you, so preserve it. Verily, the world is only for four kinds of people. There is one whom Allah has granted wealth and knowledge, so he fears his Lord regarding them, upholds family ties, and acknowledges the rights of Allah over him. He will be in the best position. There is one whom Allah has granted knowledge without wealth and he has a sincere intention and he says, if I had wealth, I would have acted like this person. If that is his intention, then he will have the same reward as the other. There is one whom Allah has granted wealth without knowledge and he squanders his wealth in ignorance, he does not fear Allah regarding it, he does not fulfil his obligations to his family, and he does not acknowledge the rights of Allah over him. He will be in the worst position. There is one whom Allah has granted neither wealth nor knowledge and he says, if I had wealth, I would have acted like this person. If that is his intention, then he will have the same sin as the other" (Tirmidhi). The hadith describes four categories of human situation.

1. Best Situation: Knowledge as well as Wealth

A man with knowledge and wealth is considered to be in the best position. When a man has knowledge, he can use it effectively to get success in this world and in hereafter. When a man has knowledge, he would fear Allah and would strive to follow all the commandments as per his knowledge.

Prophet (pbuh) said, "When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things, ceaseless charity

(sadaqah jariyah), knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (the deceased)” (Muslim). The hadith mentions three kinds of deeds which will help the person even after his death. Among them, the second is ‘knowledge’. It means knowledge imparted verbally or by any other means; which is beneficial to people. As long as people benefit from this knowledge, the teacher will receive reward for it.

On the other hand, an individual who has knowledge will be able to spend his wealth in the right avenues and will abstain from spending it on wrong avenues, which might displease Allah. He would use his wealth to fulfil the needs and requirements of his family members, he would avoid any kind of extravagance, he would never hoard resources, he would give in charity to help the poor and would use his wealth in the cause of Islam. This behaviour would help him in gaining great reward from Allah and would make him lead a successful life in this world and the hereafter.

Envy is not allowed in Islam but is permitted in two situations. Ibn Masud said, I heard the Prophet (pbuh) saying, “There is no envy except in two, a person whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given knowledge and he gives his decisions accordingly and teaches it to others” (Bukhari). This shows that knowledge and wealth are gifts which a person can envy about, as one can use them to do good deeds.

2. Safe Position: Knowledge without Wealth

A man with knowledge but without wealth is considered to be in safe position. He will not be questioned about his wealth, on the day of judgement. He only needs to make right use of knowledge given to him, which would lead him to success, in this world and the hereafter.

When a person is granted knowledge, he can use it to become an obedient slave of Allah. He conveys knowledge

to others, so that they benefit from it. The reward would ultimately come back to him. Abdullaah ibn Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "The poor of the Muhajireen will enter Paradise forty years ahead of the rich" (Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh). From the hadith, we learn a pious person, not having much wealth would enter Paradise soon.

3. Worst Position: Ignorance and Wealth

A man who is not granted knowledge but is granted wealth is considered to be in the worst position. It is very important for a person to gain knowledge, as lack of adequate knowledge will lead a person to hell. He will obey his whims and fancies. Prophet (pbuh) said, "Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim" (Bukhari).

When a person is granted wealth without knowledge, then he would spend his wealth improperly and would commit sins. Prophet (pbuh) said, "Every Ummah (people) has a test to undergo; my Ummah will be tested through wealth" (Tirmidhi). Anas ibn Malik reported, the Messenger of Allah said, "If the son of Adam had a valley full of gold, he would like to have two valleys for nothing fills his mouth except dust. Allah will forgive whoever repents to Him" (Bukhari and Muslim). From this hadith, we learn that people are going to be tested through wealth; as man is greedy seeking more and more wealth.

In another narration, Ibn Masood reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "The son of Adam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned about five things, his life and how he spent it, his youth and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned it, his wealth how he spent it, and how he acted upon what he acquired of knowledge" (Tirmidhi). A person will be asked about how he spent his wealth and if he has spent inappropriately, he will have to face the consequences.

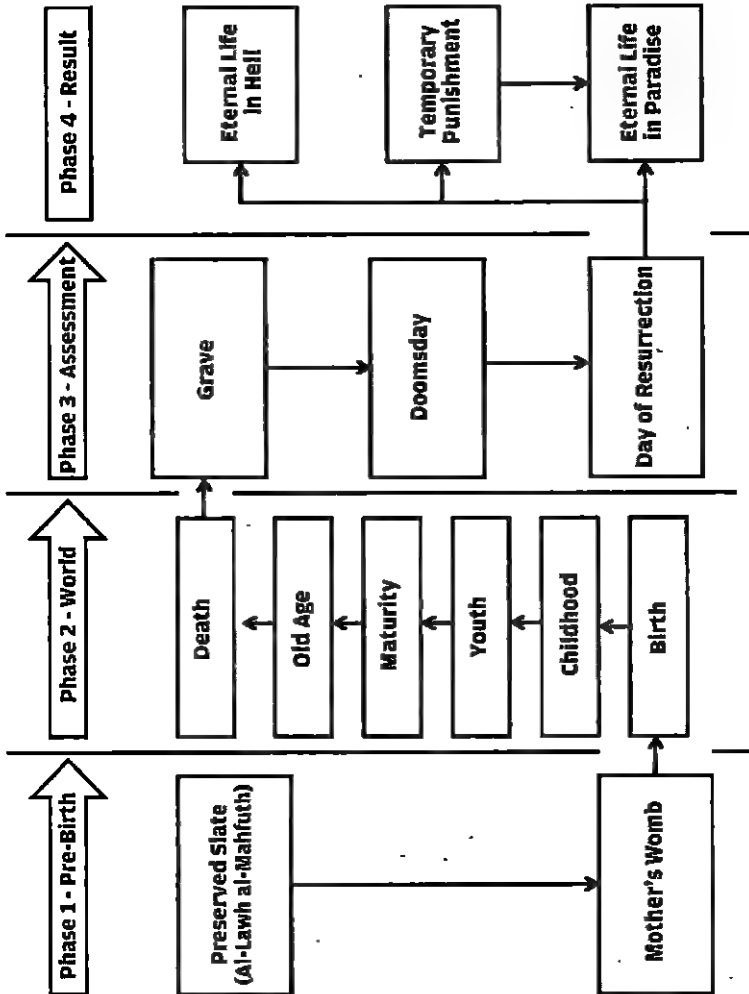
4. Neutral Position: Neither Knowledge nor Wealth

A man with no knowledge and no wealth is in neutral position. A person with no knowledge would do what he likes. It is a stage where the person tends to commit sins because of his ignorance. But the person does not have wealth. So improper use of wealth will not be possible for him. It is a stage where the individual may be led in either direction; good or bad.

Conclusion

One should always pray to Allah to grant him right knowledge and sufficient wealth so that he could use both resources effectively and be successful in this world and the hereafter. One should always remember that knowledge and wealth are two important bounties given by Allah. Every one should use them carefully. He would be accountable for them on the Day of Judgement.

Four Phases of Life



Introduction

Life has various stages through which an individual passes. Many organisms pass through successive stages. In biology, one observes a series of changes in form that many organisms undergo.

The following are the various phases which a Human Being goes through:

1. Pre-Birth

i. Preserved Slate (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz)

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Has there (not) come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing (even) mentioned?" (Qur'an 76:1). Allah created all souls of the descendants of Adam and Eve, who were predestined to come to this earth.

ii. Mother's Womb

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging (i.e., the womb). Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump (of flesh), and We made (from) the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So, blessed is Allah, the best of creators" (Qur'an 23:12-14). The physical creation of man starts with a drop of sperm which takes its own course to develop into a complete human being. It is a process which takes place in the womb of the mother.

2. World

i. Birth

Allah says in the Qur'an, "It is He who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot; then He brings you out as a child; then (He develops you) that you reach your (time of) maturity, then (further) that you become elders. And among you is he who is taken in death before (that), so that you reach a specified term;

and perhaps you will use reason" (Qur'an 40:67). The journey of man in this world begins with his birth.

ii. Childhood

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them ..." (Qur'an 6:151). From the verse it is clear that, the stage after birth is the age of childhood. Allah instructs people not to kill their children; due to fear of poverty.

iii. Youth

Allah says in the Qur'an, "It is We who relate to you, (O Muhammad), their story in truth. Indeed, they were youth who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance" (Qur'an 18:13). After childhood, the next state which the human being enters is youth.

iv. Maturity

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning (period) is thirty months. (He grows) until, when he reaches maturity and reaches (the age of) forty years ..." (Qur'an 46:15). The verse speaks about various stages of human being. When he attains the age of forty years, maturity begins.

v. Old Age

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent" (Qur'an 30:54). Allah moves people from strength to weakness, which is nothing but old age.

vi. Death

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Every soul will taste death ..." (Qur'an 3:185). This is the state which ends the journey of the human being on the face of this earth and takes him to a different world. No living creature has been sent to this world permanently, but has to depart one day. Thus, death marks the end of a person's stay.

3. Assessment

i. Grave

Allah says in the Qur'an, "The Fire; they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the Day the Hour appears (it will be said), "Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment" (Qur'an 40:46). The verse is speaking about punishment which transgressors will have to undergo when they are in grave. They will be shown glimpses of hellfire every morning and evening. This constantly fills them with dread and horror in view of the fact that they will eventually be hurled into Hell. The culprits will keep on witnessing this punishment from the moment of their death.

On the other hand, the pious are shown a glimpse of their felicitous end which God has earmarked for them. Abdullah ibn Umar reported that, Prophet (pbuh) said, "If anyone of you dies, he is shown his final abode, every morning and evening. If he is among the people of Paradise then the adobe of the people of Paradise, and if he is among the people of Fire then the adobe of the people of Fire. They are told that they will be transported to the place earmarked for them when God will resurrect them and summon them to His presence on the Day of Judgement" (Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad).

ii. Doomsday

The doomsday would begin with a trumpet, when everything in the heavens and earth will be terrified. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And (warn of) the Day the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on

the earth will be terrified except whom Allah wills. And all will come to Him humbled" (Qur'an 27:87).

After the first, the second trumpet will be blown, when the destruction would begin and everything on the earth would perish. It will be a day which would be very heavy on the heavens and the earth. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Everyone upon the earth will perish, and there will remain the Face of Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour" (Qur'an 55:26-27).

iii. Day of Resurrection

Allah says in the Qur'an, "...Then it will be blown again, and at once they will be standing, looking on (Qur'an 39:68). "And (that they may know) that the Hour is coming – no doubt about it – and that Allah will resurrect those in the graves" (Qur'an 22:7). It describes about the period of resurrection where the third and final horn will be blown. Once the horn is blown, all people would be resurrected from graves.

iv. Day of Judgement

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly" (Qur'an 2:281). It is the day when all deeds of every individual will be presented in front of Allah and recompense will be given to people as per their deeds. Records will be given to people in their right hand, for those who were believers and did righteous deeds. Records will be given to people in their left hand, for those who disbelieved and committed wrong acts.

4. Result

i. Paradise

Allah says in the Qur'an, "But they who believe and do righteous deeds – those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally" (Qur'an 2:82). This is the

last and final phase of a human being where he meets the consequences of deeds, done on earth. For people who believed and who did righteous deeds, for them Allah has promised paradise where they would abide for ever, where they would get all that they desire.

ii. Temporary Punishment

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Allah will bring out many people from the Fire and admit them into Paradise" (Muslim). Such people would not remain in hell forever, they would be in hell for a certain period and later they would be moved to paradise.

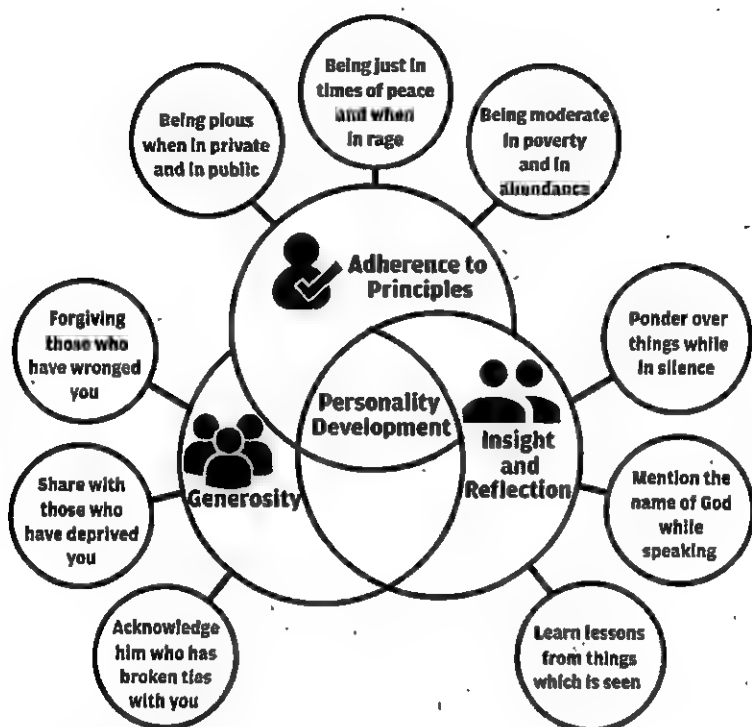
iii. Hell

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Our Lord, indeed whoever You admit to the Fire – You have disgraced him, and for the wrongdoers there are no helpers" (Qur'an 3:192). "Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger – that for him is the fire of Hell, wherein he will abide eternally? That is the great disgrace" (Qur'an 9:63). The people who do not believe in the one true God and the messenger and do not follow the commandments of Allah; are doomed. Hell would be their eternal destination, whose fuel would be men and stones.

Conclusion

The four phases of human life give us a comprehensive picture. Islam helps a person plan his future. The different phases of life present a vision beyond the life of this world. The knowledge helps a person know reality. He will think beyond attainment of popularity and prestige. Instead, he will strive and struggle for a better result in the hereafter.

Towards Development



Introduction

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "My Lord commanded me to adhere to nine things, He commanded me to be pious when in private and in public, be Just in times of peace and when in rage, be moderate in poverty and in abundance, be forgiving to him who wrongs me, share with him who deprives me, acknowledge him who broke relations with me, ponder over things while I am silent, mention Him (God) whenever I speak, and learn lessons from things that I see" (Mishkat). The hadith comprises of nine traits, which can be sub divided into three components, viz principled

life, large heartedness and depth. These are elements of developed personality.

1. Principled Response

One's ability to respond correctly to specific situations and meet challenges, is an important attribute of developed self.

i. Being pious, when in private and in public

One should always strive to be pious both in private and in public. Many times, a person tends to be very noble when in public, as people are watching him, but his actions in private may not be good.

ii. Being just in times of peace and when in rage

Being just is one of the most important principles of Islam. It is also very important for an individual to be just, in every situation. Generally, a person might be just when he is at peace but may fail to do justice when in rage; thus being just on both occasions is emphasised.

iii. Being moderate, in poverty and in affluence

One should always try to be moderate in spending money, whether one is rich or poor. Generally, a person would be moderate in spending during poverty but the real challenge is to be moderate when Allah has blessed a person with abundant wealth. Some become stingy and do not spend money and some spend it extravagantly. Thus, Allah cautions people in this regard and says in the Qur'an, "... And do not be extravagant; indeed, He does not like those who are extravagant" (Qur'an 6:141) and "And do not make your hand (as) chained to your neck ..." (Qur'an 17:29). "And (believers are) those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or miserly but are ever, between that, (justly) moderate" (Qur'an 25:67).

2. Generosity

One should be generous in interaction and communication with others. People communicate in verbal and nonverbal ways. One needs the ability to communicate and interact with members of society, avoiding undue conflict or disharmony. The three aspects described in the hadith are as follows:

i. Forgiving those who have wronged you

Forgiving people is a very difficult act. A man should have a big heart to forgive people. It is more difficult to forgive when the injury is big. One may consider events after the battle of Uhud. Muslims had to face a massive loss in the battle after initial success. Hamza, the uncle of Prophet was martyred. Also seventy companions were martyred. Prophet lost his tooth and his mouth started bleeding. All this happened because some companions had disobeyed the Prophet. Prophet had every right to be angry with them, because of their disobedience. But Allah instructed the Prophet to forgive them.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "So by mercy from Allah, (O Muhammad), you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude (in speech) and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in important matters. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely (upon Him)" (Qur'an 3:159). Prophet is being told to be lenient, not to be rude in speech, not to be harsh at heart, pardon the defaulters and also consult them before taking decisions. Thus, only people with great personality, will be able to forgive people.

ii. Share with those who have deprived you

People generally share things with people who have been generous with them. It is recommended here that one should actually share with those who have deprived him. Allah says, "... Repel (evil) by that (deed) which is better

...” (Qur’an 41:34). Islam always teaches us to repel evil with good, which would help win hearts.

A neighbour of the Prophet would put thorns in his path and also throw garbage and would slander him. One day when she did not throw garbage, Prophet was concerned about her health. He went to her house to enquire about her. This shows how the Prophet was generous to neighbours even when they had illtreated him.

iii. Acknowledge him who has broken ties with you

One should strive to maintain good relations with people even when they have broken ties with him. This is a difficult task. Abu Hurairah reports that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, “It is not lawful for a Muslim to forsake his (Muslim) brother beyond three days; and whosoever does so for more than three days, and then dies, will certainly enter Hell” (Abu Dawood). Abu Khirash Hadrad ibn Abu Hadrad Al-Aslami said, I heard the Prophet (pbuh) saying, “Whosoever forsakes his brother for a year is like one who sheds his blood” (Abu Dawood). Prophet said, “Does not enter Paradise he who breaks family ties” (Bukhari). These narrations show the importance of maintaining relations with people.

3. Depth

Self-image of one is formed by expectations that one has from one’s own self. Seriousness and introspection are important traits as they lead to self development.

i. Ponder over events

In order to get closer to Allah, one should ponder over the universe. Thus one perceives signs of Allah and gets closer to him. The Qur’an invites people to ponder over the creation of Allah. Allah says, “And of His signs is (that) He shows you the lightning (causing) fear and hope, and He sends down rain from the sky by which He brings to life the earth after its lifelessness. Indeed, in that are signs for a

person who uses reason” (Qur’an 30:24). Thus, the verse is asking people to ponder over creation.

ii. Mention the name of God while speaking

The communication of the individual should be God centric. Whenever one is communicating, he should use the name of Allah and should remember Him. Making the discussion God centric will make a person God conscious. This will help him refrain from improper use of tongue such as backbiting, slandering, lying, insulting and cursing. While the communication of the person is God centric, he would find it easier to abstain from sins.

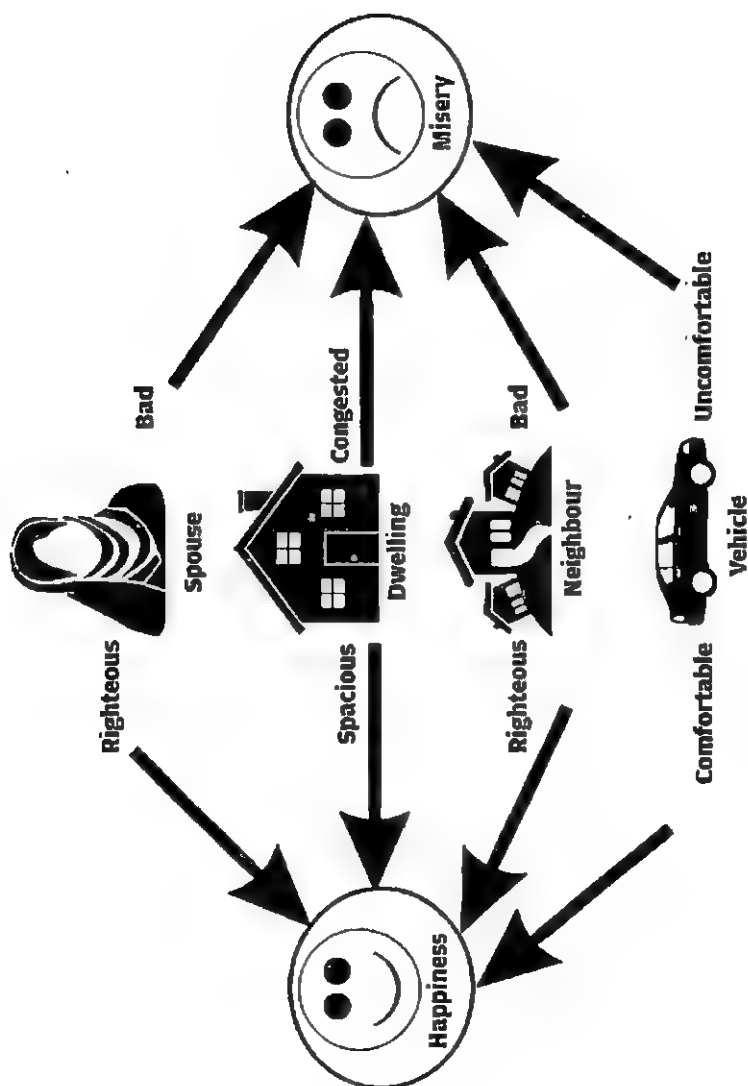
iii. Learn lessons from what you see

A person should always strive to learn from things he sees around him. He can also learn from mistakes. One should be alert about various developments around him. He may observe people making mistakes. He can avoid mistakes rather than repeating them.

Conclusion

The above mentioned nine points are simple, but basic. When one makes these qualities one’s habits then he would definitely become a much better and richer personality. He would be successful in hereafter. Imbibing these qualities is nothing but following the methodology of Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). He did possess all these nine qualities.

Happiness and Misery



Introduction

Everyone in this world wants to be happy and free from misery. Some think that money would give them happiness, so they work hard to earn money. It is thought that trips to new places would bring happiness, so they travel to different places in vacations. People also look for other sources of happiness. But these activities usually give temporary pleasure. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Four things are part of happiness, a righteous spouse, a spacious dwelling, a righteous neighbour, and a comfortable mount. Four things are part of misery, a bad neighbour, a bad spouse, a restrictive dwelling, and an uncomfortable mount" (Sahih ibn Hibban).

1. Spouse

The partner in life would play a very significant role in everyone's life. If one gets a good spouse then one would be the happiest person. A righteous spouse would be a good companion, would make the house comfortable and would bring respect in society. Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-as reported, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "The world is but a (quick passing) enjoyment; and the best enjoyment of the world is a pious and virtuous woman" (Muslim). Thus, in order to get a good spouse, Islam teaches believers to select the spouse based on piety. One should give preference to piety over money, beauty or family lineage.

On the other hand, when a person gets a bad spouse then his life would be filled with problems and misery. A bad spouse would create discord in the house, which would destroy peace. The person would find it difficult to do anything constructive in life. He will not have peace of mind. Thus, a good spouse is always a blessing.

2. Dwelling (House)

Dwelling refers to the house in which a person stays. When a person has a spacious house, he tends to have a degree of privacy, that would give him peace of mind. He

would be able entertain guests, segregating men from women. He would have place for everything. A spacious house helps a person live a comfortable life. A peaceful house is a blessing. One should thank Allah for it.

On the other hand, when a person lives in a congested house, he would not have enough space to store things and dwell peacefully. He would not get privacy, thus denying him peace of mind.

3. Neighbour

A good neighbour helps a person live a happy life. If neighbours are good, they would not cause any trouble or discomfort. Neighbours are expected to help a person in adverse times. Good neighbours would keep an eye on your house in your absence, would provide you with things which you might urgently need. Thus, Islam gives high emphasis on being good to neighbours. Honouring the rights of a neighbour is related to one's belief. One should always ask Allah to give us good neighbours.

Bad neighbours can make one's life hell. They would make noise, pollute the air and might cause damage to property. They would never be of any help, when help is urgently needed. Thus, a bad neighbour would become a bane to people.

4. Mount (Vehicle)

Man needs a comfortable vehicle to travel. When living in a city, the need of a comfortable vehicle is obvious. One has to travel regularly. Thus, one should ask Allah for a comfortable vehicle, which would help in travelling easily.

Without a vehicle, one would have to depend on public transport, which might not be convenient or comfortable.

Conclusion

There are things, which bring temporary happiness and there are other bounties which give durable happiness.

Visiting a botanical garden, an amusement park, a new place, would give temporary pleasure, But one's constant interaction is with spouse, house, neighbour and vehicle. If they are good, then one would lead a happy life.

Man and Dog Metaphor

(Qur'an 7:176)



When Dog is Chased, it Pants (situation of Fear)



When the Dog is Left alone, it Pants (Normal Situation)



Introduction

Materialism refers to excessive desire for money and possessions, in disregard of spiritual or ethical values. As Muslims, our objective is not money or worldly possessions. We are guided by spiritual and ethical values. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And if We had willed, We could

have elevated him thereby, but he adhered (instead) to the earth and followed his desires. So, his example is like that of the dog, if you chase him, he pants, or if you leave him, he (still) pants. That is the example of the people who denied Our signs. So, relate the similies that perhaps they will give thought" (Qur'an 7:176).

The reason of comparing human character to that of a dog is to demonstrate excessive worldliness of a shallow person. In several languages of the world, those overly devoted to worldliness are called 'dogs of the world'. The dog sees the entire world from one perspective alone, that of his belly. Even if a rock is hurled at him, he runs towards it, in the hope that it might be a piece of bone or bread. Before he discovers it to be a rock, he hastens to seize it in his mouth. In any situation, his constant greed for food does not diminish, he continues to pant by dropping his tongue outside. He would not be content with his portion of food but would try to prevent any other dog from coming close. After he satisfies his appetite, he looks forward to satisfy his sexual urge. Thus, food and sex become the two main objectives of a dog's life.

The weakness of human beings is pointed out by Allah in the Qur'an. Allah says, "And you love wealth with immense love" (Qur'an 89:20). "And indeed man is, in love of wealth, intensely devoted to it." (Qur'an 100:8).

Man is greedy by nature. Sahl ibn Sad narrated that, I heard Ibn Az-Zubair who was on the pulpit at Mecca, delivering a sermon, saying, "O men, the Prophet used to say, "If the son of Adam were given a valley full of gold, he would love to have a second one; and if he were given the second one, he would love to have a third, for nothing fills the belly of Adam's son except dust. And Allah forgives he who repents to Him". (Bukhari). This shows that man is very greedy for material wealth and would always want more and more, even if he is already in possession of more than what he requires. The following are the situations which help us understand this trait.

Situations

2. When the Dog is Chased, it Pants (Apprehension)

'Dog being Chased' is a situation similar to that of a man in fear. 'Pants' refers to greed of man. It is a situation where man becomes slave of desires, due to fear. He fears about his future (old age), loss of business or job. He fears about his inability to meet expenditure on his daughter's marriage. He is afraid that his wife would become angry with him, that he might not be able to live a luxurious life. Due to such fears, man wants more and more money. Due to greed, his earnings seem insignificant to him, and he tries to accumulate more and more wealth. For such people, fear acts as a catalyst to become materialistic in approach.

2. When the Dog is Left alone, it Pants

(Normal Circumstances)

'Dog is Left alone' is a situation similar to that of a man in normal circumstances. 'Pants' refers to the greed of man. He is looking only for materialistic gain. While making friends, socializing, maintaining relationships, he would always search for material benefit. In every transaction, he desires material gain. He ignores Allah's guidance for the sake of worldly benefits. His greed never ends. People may caution or scold him but he persists in his greed.

Conclusion

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and Allah has with Him a great reward" (Qur'an 64:15). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Every Ummah (nation) has a test to undergo, my Ummah (nation) will be tried through wealth" (At-Tirmidhi). This shows that the people are going to be tested through wealth. Those excessively busy in amassing wealth would fail the test.

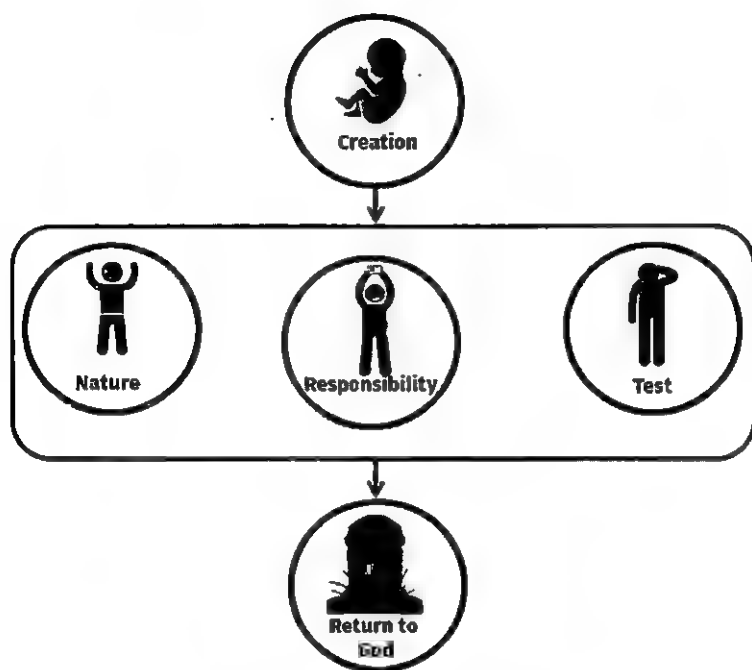
In order to control the love for the world, Islam instructs believers to pay Zakah and give charity. This would promote

brotherhood and affection among Muslims. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Never will you attain the good (reward) until you spend (in the way of Allah) from that which you love. And whatever you spend indeed, Allah is Knowing of it" (Qur'an 3:92).

Most importantly, man should not behave like a dog. Dog is a greedy animal. It is always sniffing the road to find a piece of bone. It always lolls its tongue whether you chase it away or leave it alone.

Many people ruin their faith, due to greed. This devotion to wealth creates in man evil instincts, miserliness, selfishness and arrogance, which in turn involve him in sins, falsehood, deceit and cruelty. This behaviour leads to disorder and destruction in the world and in the Hereafter. Thus, man should always remember hereafter. Then he would overcome greed. He would get closer to Allah, by behaving like a human being.

Journey of Man



Introduction

To make correct decisions, one should know one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values and goals. The Qur'an enables man to discover himself and know himself. The Qur'an describes creation, nature of man, human responsibility, and his return to God.

Stages

Following are the various stages of man's journey.

1. Creation

Regarding the creation of man, mankind was created from a single soul (Qur'an 4:1, 6:98, 7:189, 15:29, 32:9, 38:72 and 39:6). Man was created from clay (Qur'an 6:2,

7:12, 15:26, 15:33, 23:12, 38:76, 32:7, 38:71 and 55:14). Human race is propagated through a drop of sperm (Qur'an 16:4, 18:37, 22:6, 23:13, 25:54, 35:11, 36:77, 40:67, 76:2, 80:19 and 86:6-7). Human race arose from a man and a woman. (Qur'an 49:13 and 75:39).

2. Human Nature, Responsibility and Test

Allah created human beings. He blessed them with the unique human nature. Man is charged with responsibilities. Life is a test. They are going to encounter testing situations in their lives.

i. Nature

By nature, man is tempted by love for women, sons, gold and silver, branded horses, cattle and tilled land (Qur'an 3:14 and 89:20). Man is created weak (Qur'an 4:28). When adversity touches man, he prays to Allah and when Allah removes the problem, he continues to disobey Allah (Qur'an 10:12, 39:49, 41:49-51 and 89:15-16). Man wrongs himself (Qur'an 10:44). Man is despairing and ungrateful (Qur'an 11:9). Man is exultant and boastful (Qur'an 11:10). Man is impatient (Qur'an 17:11, 21:37 and 70:20). Man is stingy (Qur'an 17:100). Man is prone to dispute (Qur'an 18:54). Man is always supplicating for good things (Qur'an 41:49). We understand that man has many negative qualities and he should strive to overcome them so that he can be successful.

ii. Responsibility

Qur'an mentions the responsibilities of man. Man is to worship Allah (Qur'an 2:21 and 51:56). Man is responsible for himself (Qur'an 5:105). Man should not let Satan tempt him (Qur'an 7:27). He should believe in Allah and His Messenger (Qur'an 7:158). He should change what is within himself (Qur'an 8:43 and 13:11). Man should be just, display good conduct, be generous towards relatives, forbid immorality, avoid bad conduct and oppression

(Qur'an 16:90). He should not worship anyone except Allah and be kind to his parents (Qur'an 17:23). Man should not appropriate the property of orphan. He should fulfil his commitment (Qur'an 17:34). Man should be honest in measuring and weighing (Qur'an 17: 35). He should not follow that about which he has no knowledge (Qur'an 17:36). Man should fear Allah (Qur'an 22:1 and 31:33).

iii. Test

Qur'an describes trials to be faced by man. People will be tested with fear of hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits (Qur'an 2:155). Indeed, they will be tested through whatever is given to them (Qur'an 6:165). Man will be tested in his possessions and his children (Qur'an 8:28). People will be tested to see which of them is best in deeds (Qur'an 11:7 and 18:7). Man will be tested with evil and good (Qur'an 21:35, 39:49 and 89:15-16). Life and death constitute the test (Qur'an 67:2). Man was created to be tested (Qur'an 76:2).

3. Return to God

After the life on this earth, man has to return to his Creator. Allah cautions man to prepare for life after death. Regarding the return of man, Allah says "How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned" (Qur'an 2:28). "And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be treated unjustly" (Qur'an 2:281). "To Him is your return all together. (It is) the promise of Allah [which is] truth. Indeed, He begins the (process of) creation and then repeats it that He may reward those who have believed and done righteous deeds, in justice. But those who disbelieved will have a drink of

scalding water and a painful punishment for what they used to deny” (Qur’an 10:4).

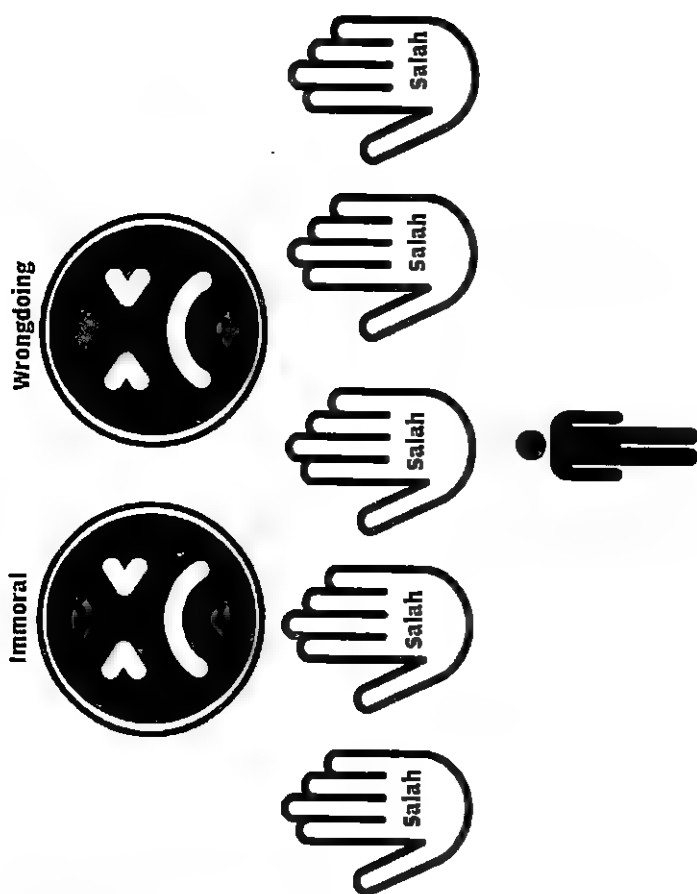
These are just a few verses, the other verses in the Qur’an which speak about return to God are 2:156, 2:245, 5:105, 6:36, 6:60-62, 6:108, 9:94, 9:105, 10:23, 10:30, 10:45-46, 10:56, 11:4, 18:87, 21:93, 28:70, 28:88, 29:8, 29:17, 29:58, 30:11, 31:15, 32:11, 36:83, 39:7, 39:44, 41:21, 43:85, 45:15, 62:8, 75:10-15 and 96:8.

Conclusion

Qur’an speaks about creation of man, human nature, man’s responsibility and trials and the return of man to Allah. Allah says “And (mention, O Muhammad), when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a vicegerent...” (Qur’an 2:30). Thus, Allah has appointed man as vicegerent to carry out the commands given by Him.

Knowing oneself is the most profitable knowledge as it takes man closer to Allah. Man, by discovering himself achieves a high level of spirituality. The Qur’an comprehensively explains about the creation, nature, responsibilities, trials and return of man. We should remember that man is sent to this world according to Allah’s Plan. Therefore, man should recognize himself before it is too late. Discovery of self will help man understand the purpose of life to live a meaningful life. Otherwise, there will not be any difference man and animal.

Salah's Role in Combating Evil



Introduction

Salah is the second pillar of Islam. Salah is to be performed five times a day and is mandatory on every Muslim. It is an expression of communication with Allah, an act that purifies our soul and helps us get closer to Allah. Salah is remembrance of Allah, with heart, tongue and body.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Recite, (O Muhammad), what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do" (Qur'an 29:45). The verse states that, Salah helps a person abstain from immorality and wrong acts. Let us understand how Salah helps a person to abstain from these misdeeds.

Explanation

Immorality (Fahsha) implies an attitude or action, not in accordance with the standards of right or good conduct. It signifies failure to adhere to moral principles. Immorality is any excessive or indecent act. Vulgarity in action or speech, indecent clothes, unlawful sexual relationship are instances of immorality.

Wrongdoing (Munkar) refers to behaviour which is bad, improper, evil, unethical or dishonest. Wrongdoing is every act of disobedience of God which the (functioning) intellect and natural human inclination would prevent. Actions like, telling a lie, stealing, being unfair, etc., can be termed as wrongdoing.

Immoral and wrong acts are those which man by nature dislikes, and which have always been held as evil in principle by people of every community and society, however depraved and perverted practically. Salat's essential and inseparable quality is that it restrains man from immoral and wrong acts. One who performs Salah should, in fact, refrain from evil and indecent acts.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful, We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion" (Qur'an 43:36). Remembrance of Allah is the essence of Salah. Thus, sincerity in Salah makes one God conscious and protects the person from wrong doing.

Salah is the most effective tool to put checks and brakes on bad conduct, to restrain man from transgression.

What check could be more effective than a reminder five times a day calling for remembrance of Allah. Man is reminded again and again that he is not a libertine, but is the slave of One God. God is aware of his open and hidden acts, secret aims and intentions of heart. A time will surely come when he will have to account for all his deeds, before Allah. Man is not only reminded of this truth but is given practical training at every prayer time that he should not disobey any of his God's commands, even in secret. From the time that he stands up for the prayer till its completion, man has to continuously perform certain acts, which are not known to any one except himself and God. God certainly knows whether the person has obeyed God's law or disobeyed it.

For example, a person will not perform Salah without ablution and without conscious intention. He would recite the necessary verses from the Qur'an. He would be aware that Allah knows all his actions. This God consciousness would help him abstain from immoral and indecent acts. When a man performs Salah regularly, it means that man is responding to Allah's command. This would ultimately help him follow other instructions of Allah.

Salah reminds one of the day of Judgement. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Do you see the one who denies the Judgment (to come)? For that is the one who drives away the orphan. And does not encourage the feeding of the poor. So, (this is a) warning to the worshippers, who are heedless of their prayer. Those who make show (of their deeds). And withhold (simple) assistance" (Qur'an 107:1-7).

The above verses mention five vices of a person who denies the day of Judgement. He drives away the orphan, he does not encourage feeding the poor, he is heedless of his prayers, he shows off when he does good deeds and finally he withholds simple assistance from people. Such a person is careless about Salah. This indifference is a sign of lack of faith or weak faith in the day of Judgement.

Regularity in Salah enhances the belief in day of Judgement.

One's conscience is awakened several times a day when one performs Salah. Man is thus encouraged to be responsible in his duties. He is practically trained to cultivate the spirit of obedience, abide by Divine law which he believes in. Such pious behaviour is expected in private as well as public life. He needs no external force to make him abide by Divine law. He is obedient to God; regardless of people knowing about it or not.

Allah, in many places in the Qur'an, instructs believers to 'establish Salah', i.e. perform it on a continuous basis and on time. By doing so, one purifies one's heart, develops a strong faith in the day of judgement and strengthens his relationship with Allah. This leads him to do good deeds and keeps him away from immoral and wrong acts.

Islam uses moral force, developed by Salah, to dissuade people from immoral and indecent acts, whereas the world usually employs legal imperatives to do so. Salah imparts superiority of character to a believer.


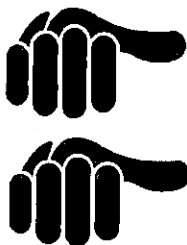


Conclusion

The objective of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was to replace evil with good and Salah was provided as one significant tool to do so. Ultimately, it raised believers in character high above others. Islam encourages people to do good and to abstain from wrong and Salah helps them do so. Allah has commanded people to perform Salah five times a day. Performing Salah helps one become pious and helps him abstain from sin. Thus, Salah is a guardian for believers.

The verse mentions a litmus test to see if Salah is effective or not. If Salah is effective then the person would abstain from immoral and indecent acts. If not effective, the person would continue with his bad behaviour. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "He whose prayer did not restrain

him from the evil and indecent acts, offered no prayer at all" (Ibn Abi Hatim). Ibn Abbas has reported the Prophet (pbuh) said, "The prayer which did not restrain a person from the evil and indecent acts, led him further away from Allah" (Ibn Abi Hatim and Tabarani).

Aspects of Success

Power of Wealth		Salvation in Hereafter	
Yes	No	No	Yes
Qarun 	Son of Prophet Nuh 	Salvation in Hereafter	
Prophet Dawood 	Prophet Zakariya 		

Introduction

Everyone wants to be successful. Some seek success in this world, some aspire to be successful in the hereafter. Believers would seek success in this world as well as in the hereafter. Some people are shallow, they just randomly lead their lives; but they have no aim in life. Allah says, "Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise they are indeed the attainers (of success)" (Qur'an 59:20). The verse clearly states that the companions of Paradise are the ones who are actually successful.

Being Successful in Hereafter, refers to the conduct of a person striving hard in the way of Allah and trying his best to fulfill the mission of Islam by following the Prophet and his companions. Success in this world, is popularly understood to mean possession of enough money to fulfill needs and lead a luxurious life. It refers to a person being ahead in his profession and having good reputation in society.

The following are the various situations:

1. Not Successful in Either Sense – Son of Prophet Nuh

The son of Nuh was a person who was not successful. Nuh invited him to become a believer and join him on to the ship but he declined and later he was drowned in the flood.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And (Nuh) said, "Embark therein; in the name of Allah is its course and its anchorage. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful". And it sailed with them through waves like mountains, and Nuh called to his son who was apart (from them), "O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers". (But) he said, "I will take refuge on a mountain to protect me from the water". (Nuh) said, "There is no protector today from the decree of Allah, except for whom He gives mercy". And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned" (Qur'an 11:41-43).

2. Not Successful in Hereafter – Successful in Amassing Wealth: Example of Qarun

Qarun was a rich person, in the time of Musa. He possessed so much wealth that the keys of his treasures were carried by several strong men. He was from Bani Israel. He became arrogant due to his wealth. He claimed that, his wealth is due to knowledge that he had. He was sunk into the earth along with all his treasures, as divine punishment. He was destroyed because of his transgression. He was a person who was not successful in hereafter but was very successful in accumulating wealth, till he met his doom.

“Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Musa, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, “Donot exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant. But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters” He said, “I was only given it because of knowledge I have”...” (Qur’an 28:76-78).

3. Successful in Hereafter – Not Successful in Accumulating Wealth = Prophet Zakariyah

Prophet Zakariyah was a messenger of Allah. Despite his old age, he went to his people to deliver his sermons. He was always ready to help those in-need, in spite of not being rich. Till his old age, he had no children, he would worry as to who would carry forward his mission. Later Allah blessed him with a son (Yahya). The two important blessings in the world are money and children, and Prophet Zakariyah did not have much money. He was a person who was successful in hereafter.

Allah says in the Qur’an, “He (Zakariya) said, “My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white (hair), and never have I been in my

supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy (i.e., disappointed). And indeed, I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir Who will inherit me and inherit from the family of Yaqub. And make him, my Lord, pleasing (to You)''' (Qur'an 19:4-6).

4. Successful in Hereafter – Successful in Possessing Power in this World = Dawood

Dawood was a Prophet of Allah. Dawood was given political power by Allah. Allah strengthened the dominion of Dawood and made him a powerful king. His kingdom was vast; his enemies feared him and did not engage in war with him. He was a just and righteous ruler who brought peace and prosperity to his people. Dawood also carried out his duty as Prophet and invited people to the way of Allah. He would spend time in praying to Allah. He would listen to complaints of people and would deliver sermons to teach people about Psalms (Zaboor), the book which was revealed to him. He was successful in this world as well as in the hereafter.

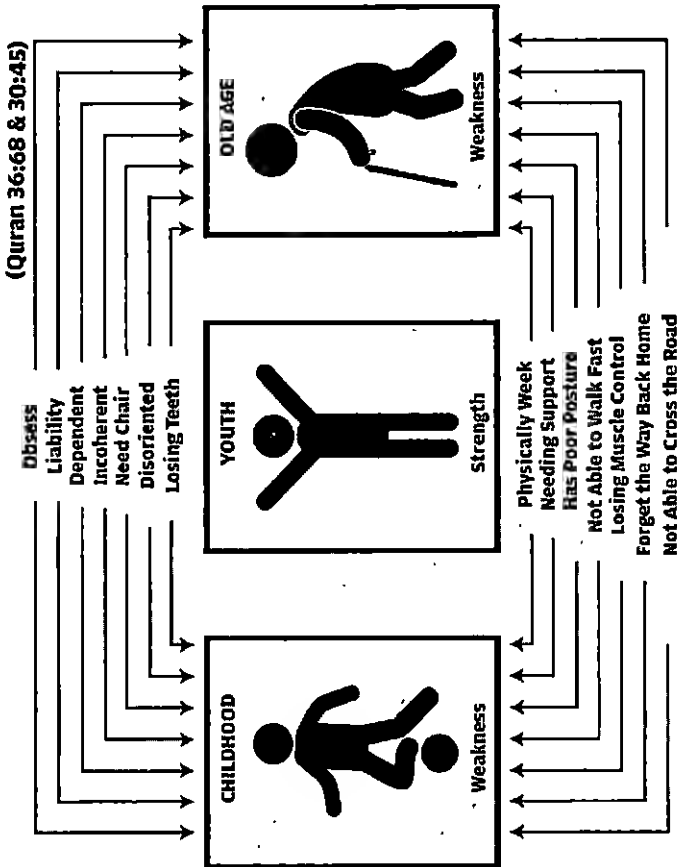
Allah says in the Qur'an, "So they (i.e. army of Taloot) defeated them by permission of Allah, and Dawood killed Jalut, and Allah gave him (i.e. Dawood) the kingship and wisdom (i.e., prophethood) and taught him from that which He willed. And if it were not for Allah checking [some] people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allah is full of bounty to the worlds" (Qur'an 2:251).

Conclusion

Success is sought by everyone; but how one defines success is crucial. Muslims, of course, need worldly possessions, but it should not be the primary objective. The primary objective is to gain success in the hereafter. If one strives for worldly gains only, one might get them but would not gain success in the hereafter. If one strives for success in the hereafter, he would also be granted bounties

of this world by Allah. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We increase for him in his harvest. And whoever desires the harvest of this world - We give him thereof, but there is not for him in the Hereafter any share" (Qur'an 42:20).

Cycle of Weakness and Strength



Introduction

What goes up would always come down. Man is made from soil and he will be returned to soil. Allah has created man in stages. As time passes, man goes through various

stages. The journey starts with birth, then early childhood, then later childhood. They are followed by adolescence, youth, adulthood, old age and finally death.

Qur'an helps us understand how Allah would reverse the physical capabilities. Allah says "And he to whom We grant long life We reverse in creation; so, will they not understand?" (Qur'an 36:68). "Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent" (Qur'an 30:54).

Explanation

When a person gets old, he again displays characteristics which he displayed during his childhood. Some of the characteristic weaknesses are; falling down, losing one's teeth, being stubborn, speaking senselessly, being a burden, not being able to walk fast or cross the road, forgetting the way back home, asking questions again and again, and needing wheelchair.

As a child, the powers of mind and body are still underdeveloped. As man grows, his capabilities grow. Moral qualities, such as courage, and honesty also unfold themselves. In extreme old age, the physical strengths are again obscured, and a second childhood returns. The back of the man who walked proudly straight and erect, is now bent.

Childhood, youth and old age have all been created by Allah. He may give death to whomsoever He wills, even before the person attains maturity. He may grant a long life to a person and yet keep him in sound health. He may bring another to agonizing old age, if He so wills. Man may have an attitude of self-conceit and arrogance, but he is actually helpless in Allah's powerful grip. He cannot change by any artifice, the state that Allah may place him in.

When a man is born, he is very weak. Then gradually he gathers strength and reaches youth. He becomes strong

and powerful. Then this strength is gradually taken away from him, and in old age he again becomes weak. This change from one state to another, and his helplessness in the matter; demonstrates that it is His Lord who created man as He willed and then passed him through various stages.

Man is impetuous by nature, in the sense that he gets involved in the present so much that he forgets the past and the future. This habit leads to serious problems. When he is young, his strength is at its peak, and he tends to be arrogant. He finds it difficult to remain within limits. In order to warn people, this verse has given a complete picture of the strength and weakness cycle in human life. It is pointed out in the verse that man starts his life in a state of weakness and ends it with similar weakness. It is only in the middle of his life that he gains strength for a short period. It is in his own interest that he should keep in mind the impending weakness, while he is still strong.

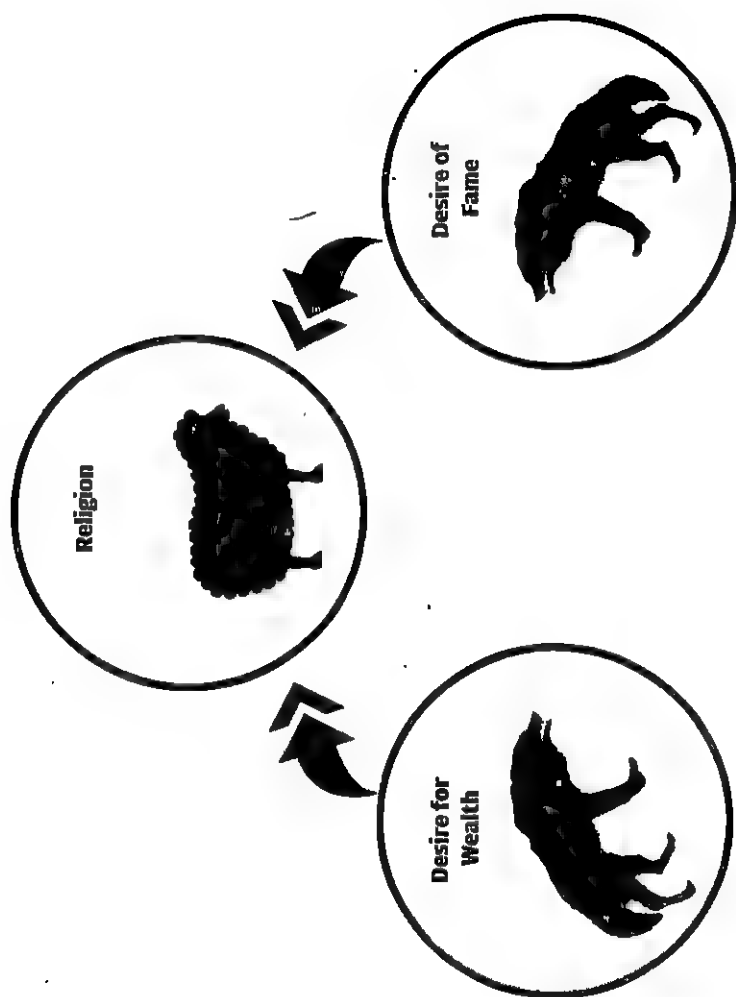
In our physical life we see how strength is evolved out of weakness and weakness out of strength. The helpless child becomes a husky man in the pride of his youth and adulthood, and then sinks to a feeble old age.

Conclusion

Onset of physical weakness which occurs naturally is sufficient to open man's eyes. The failure of physical capabilities, one after another, after having enjoyed them to full strength, is the proof of the fact that man has no power over his own physical self, that he may feel proud. All the powers that he enjoys are given by his Creator. He takes them away whenever He wills.

In very old age, man's energies fail and some people reach a stage that they are not aware of what they are doing; their memory becomes weak. Allah will diminish the energy and faculties of man in old age and in any case, can take away these faculties, at any time or at any age. If man contemplates on this truth, he cannot be proud about

Wolf and Sheep Parable



Introduction

Islam guides a person to stay away from wrong conduct and follow the principles of Islam. K'ab ibn Malik reported, Prophet (pbuh) said, "Two hungry wolves sent against the sheep do not do more damage than what a man's eagerness for wealth and fame (power, authority, self-esteem) does to his religion" (Tirmidhi).

The hadith shows how the religion of believers is corrupted by craving after wealth and worldly status. The damage caused to religion will not be less than the damage caused by two hungry and ravenous wolves, which spend the night amongst sheep whose shepherd is absent. Muslim's religion is not secure if he craves after wealth and status in this world, just as sheep are not safe from hungry wolves.

1. Wealth (First Wolf)

The greed for acquiring more and more wealth is dangerous. It creates excessive love for the world and takes the person away from religion. Prophet (pbuh) said, "Every nation has its fitnah (trial or temptation), and the fitnah of my Ummah is wealth" (Tirmidhi). "If the son of Adam had a valley full of gold, he would want to have two valleys. Nothing fills his mouth except dust, and Allah will forgive whoever repents to him" (Bukhari and Muslim). "I do not fear poverty for you, but rather I fear that you will compete for riches. And I do not fear for your lapses, but rather I fear for what you do on purpose" (Ahmed). The narrations clearly explain that the trial of the Muslim Ummah would be through wealth. People would never be content and would desire for more. They would compete with one another to earn wealth.

When a person starts to earn money, he might cultivate excessive love for money. Money provides him luxuries and helps him get popular. It would help him gain power. Luxury and popularity would attract the person so much that he would also become arrogant and miserly. He would

not spend in the way of Allah. As his business, investment and activities would expand, the individual would get busier in planning, organising and controlling them. At this point of time, even if he plans to give away some money in charity, he would do it for fame and popularity. These acts would slowly and steadily take the person away from Islam and would destroy his religion.

2. Fame (Second Wolf)

A misguided person would desire for fame and would only undertake activities which would give him fame. Fame implies popularity, power, position or authority. We have many instances in the life of Prophet (pbuh) where he cautioned seekers of power and authority. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "O Abdurrahman, do not ask for authority for if you are given it due to your request, you will be left to yourself. But, if you are given it without having requested it, you will be aided in it (by Allah)" (Bukhari and Muslim). In another instance, Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari reports, "I went to meet the Prophet (pbuh) with two other men from my tribe". One of the men said, "Give us a position of authority, O Messenger of Allah," and the other said the same. So the Prophet said, "We do not entrust this matter (of authority) to whosoever asks for it or whosoever is covetous of it" (Bukhari and Muslim).

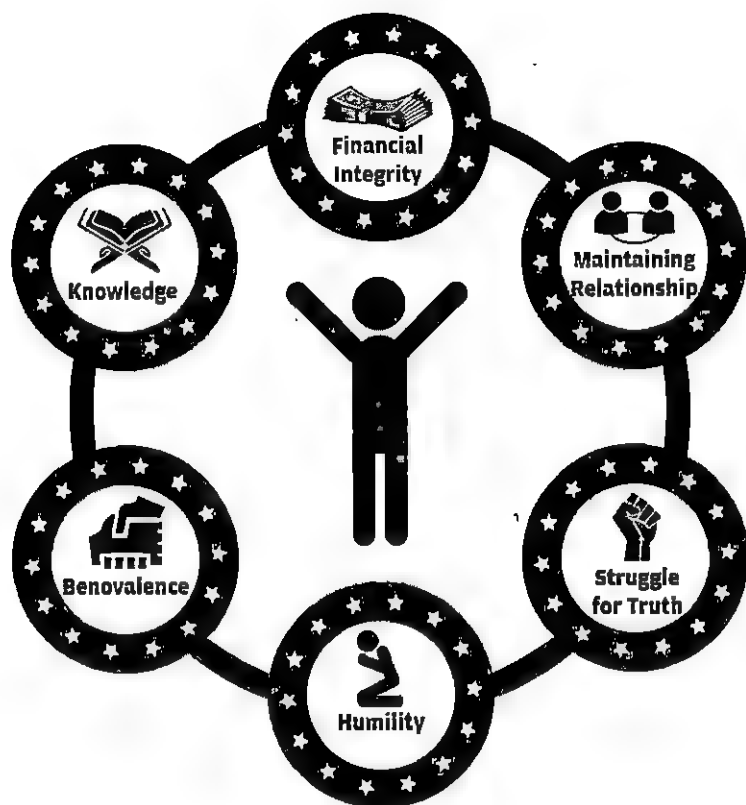
When a person starts doing things to gain fame, he loses the spirit to please Allah. He would only do a deed to get some material benefit. Wealth would be a physical need which can be seen. Desire for fame is a mental attitude which may not be manifest. Prophet has said, "A successful man is one who gives in charity and hides it, such that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives in charity; and a successful man is one who remembered Allah in private and so his eyes shed tears" (Bukhari). From this we learn that one should do good acts to please Allah and not to gain fame.

Desire for fame is dangerous. One needs to do noble deeds to please Allah and not to please people. The desire for fame would destroy a person's religion. He would work for fame, popularity and recognition. He would not be a sincere slave of God.

Conclusion

The hadith basically contains a severe warning against the evil of craving after wealth and fame. Wealth and fame might look glittery and pleasing but they are worthless in the hereafter. Devotion to wealth and desire for fame would destroy the religion of a person in a gradual but steady manner.

Best Conduct



Introduction

We are often told that 'this (action or option) is the best'. Have we ever asked whether the claim has any authority behind it. We are given lists of best cars, films, food items, tourist places, etc. We need to ponder whether these lists are genuine. However, Prophetic wisdom is always characterized by certainty. Prophet Muhammad has told us about elements of best conduct.

1. Financial Integrity

Prophet (pbuh) said, "The best amongst you is he who pays his debts in the most handsome manner" (Bukhari). Islam takes the matter of debt very seriously and warns against unnecessary borrowing. It urges Muslim to avoid borrowing as much as possible. It is very important that that a person pays back the money which he has borrowed. Ayesha said that the Prophet used to say in his prayer: "O Allah, I seek refuge with You from sin and heavy debt". Someone asked him, "How often you seek refuge from heavy debt" He said, "When a man gets into debt, he would tell lies, and he would make a promise and break it" (Bukhari and Muslim).

Muhammad ibn Jahsh said, "We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah when he raised his head towards the sky, then he put his palm on his forehead and said, "SubhanAllah, what a serious matter has been revealed to me". We remained silent and were afraid to ask. The following morning, I asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, what is this serious matter that has been revealed?". He said, "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if a man were killed in battle for the sake of Allah, then brought back to life, then killed and brought back to life again, then killed, and he owed a debt, he would not enter Paradise until his debt was paid off" (Nisai). This shows that even a martyr will not enter paradise, without paying his debts.

The Prophet refrained from offering the funeral prayer for one who had died owing two dinars, until Abu Qataadah promised to pay it off for him. Abu Qataadah reported to the Prophet the following day and said, I have paid the debt. The Prophet said, "Now his skin has become cool for him" (Ahmad). This indicates how difficult the issue of debt is, and that one should not borrow except in cases of necessity.

It was narrated by Thawbaan that the Messenger of Allah said, "Whoever dies free from three things – arrogance, cheating and debt – will enter Paradise"

(Tirmidhi). It is also narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet said, "The soul of the believer is suspended because of his debt until it is paid off" (Tirmidhi).

2. Maintaining Relationships

In Islam, the importance of maintaining family relations is paramount. Qur'an advises us to maintain relationships. Prophet said, "The best of the believers is the most excellent of them in character" (Ibn Majah). The character of a person is exhibited in his behaviour with people. Among the various relationships, the first and foremost are with family members. The institution of family is one of the most sacred ones; from social, moral and religious perspective.

Prophet said, "The best of you are those who are best to their wives" (Tirmidhi). "The best of you are those who are best to their families" (Tabarani). "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him maintain the bonds of kinship" (Bukhari).

On the other hand, women are also specifically commanded to behave well if they want to be the best in belief and conduct. Prophet said, "The best of wives are those who please you when you see them, obey you when commanded, and who safeguard themselves and your money in your absence" (Tabarani).

Other than family ties, it is also important for people to have good relationship with their subordinates. Prophet said, "The best of your rulers are those whom you love and who love you, who pray for you and you pray for them. The worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you, and you send curses on them and they send curses on you" (Muslim). The hadith says that ruler should maintain good relationship with his followers.

Generally, a Muslim should also ensure that he maintains good relations with people around him. Once, some companions asked the Prophet "Whose Islam is the best? (Who is a good Muslim?)". He replied, "One who

avoids harming other Muslims with his tongue and hands" (Bukhari).

3. Struggle

The ultimate objective of Islam is to abolish the tyranny and lordship of man over man and bring him under the rule of One God. To stake everything you have (including your lives) to achieve this purpose is called Jihad (Struggle). Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving and Hajj Pilgrimage, make us eligible for this Struggle.

A companion asked the Prophet "O Allah's Messenger, who is the best among people?" Prophet replied, "A believer who strives his utmost in Allah's Cause with his life and property" They asked, "Who is next?" He replied, "A believer who stays in hills, worshipping Allah and leaves the people secure from his mischief" (Bukhari). In another instance, the Prophet was asked, "Which is the best deed?" He said, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle." He was then asked, "Which is the next (in goodness)?" He said, "To participate in Jihad in Allah's Cause." He was then asked, "Which is the next?" He said, "To perform Hajj-Mabrur" (Bukhari).

Prophet once asked, "Shall I tell you who has the best degree among people? A man who takes the rein of his horse to do Jihad in the way of Allah. Shall I tell you who has the best degree among people after him? A man who lives alone with a few sheep, performs the prayer, pays the zakah, and worships Allah without associating anything with him" (Muwatta). Once Abu Dhar asked the Prophet, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and to fight for His Cause..." (Bukhari). Thus, by performing the best deeds, one goes on to become the best individual.

4. Humility

Muslims constantly strive to remember and practice Islamic virtues, throughout life. Being humble means being

modest and polite and submissive to Allah. In Salah, Muslims prostrate before Allah, acknowledging human beings' humble status before Allah.

Prophet said, "The best of you are those whose shoulders are soft in prayer" (Abu Dawood and Bayhaqi). The hadith states that one should show humility when standing in front of Allah. One should remember that he is a slave of Allah. Polite people are the best.

5. Benevolence

A Muslim's conduct benefits people; he would even go out of his way to help others. Prophet said, "The best of people are those who bring most benefit to the rest of mankind" (Daraqutni). "The best of you are those with the longest lives when they are best in action" (Hakim). "The best of people are those who are best in respecting others' rights" (Ibn Majah). "The best of you are those who feed others and return greetings" (Abu Ya'la). "The best of you is he from whom good is anticipated and people feel safe from his evil. The worst of you is he from whom, no good is expected and one is not safe from his evil" (Tirmidhi).

Prophet said, "The most beloved of people according to Allah is he who brings most benefit. The most beloved of deeds according to Allah the Mighty, the Magnificent, is that you bring happiness to a fellow Muslim, or relieve him of distress, or pay off his debt or stave away hunger from him. It is more beloved to me that I walk with my brother Muslim in his time of need than I stay secluded in the mosque for a month. Whoever holds back his anger, Allah will cover his faults and whoever suppresses his fury while being able to express it, Allah will fill his heart with satisfaction on the Day of Standing. Whoever walks with his brother Muslim in need, until he has relieved him of misery, Allah will establish his feet firmly on the day when all feet shall slip. Indeed, bad character ruins deeds just as vinegar ruins honey" (Tabarani). Ultimately, helping others makes a person the best.

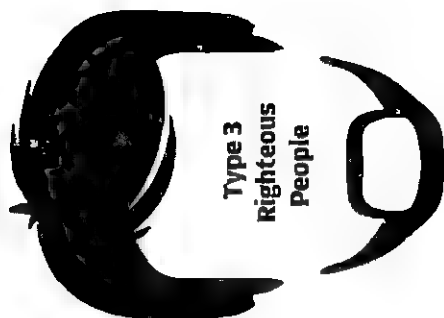
6. Knowledge

Islam has given great importance to pursuit of knowledge. Among various sources of knowledge, the most important is the Qur'an. In the first five verses revealed, we can see that the word 'read' is repeated two times, the word 'pen' is mentioned once and the word 'teach' is repeated twice. Thus Prophet said, "The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it" (Bukhari). From this we learn that gaining the knowledge of the Qur'an and sharing it with others, makes people best in the norm set by Allah.

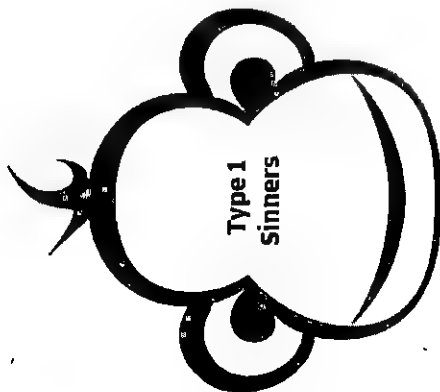
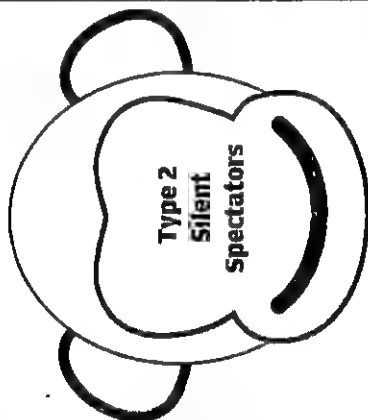
Conclusion

Best means being ahead. Best is about being the noblest. Everyone wants to be the best, but how should one proceed? The life of Prophet provides the answer. He was the best human being. He taught believers noble deeds. According to Islam, to be the best; one should do justice in all matters; in financial transactions as well as social relationships. One should strive in the way of Allah, cultivate humility and piety, serve others, gain and share knowledge. If one does all this, one would become the best person, getting success in this world and the hereafter.

Lessons from Sabbath's Episode



(Quran 7:163-166)



Introduction

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And ask them about the town that was by the sea - when they transgressed in (the matter of) the sabbath - when their fish came to them openly on their sabbath day, and the day they had no sabbath, the fish did not come to them. Thus, did We give them trial because they were defiantly disobedient. And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise (or warn) a people whom Allah is (about) to destroy or to punish, with a severe punishment?". They (the advisors of good behaviour) said, "(We do advise them) To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they (the sinners) may fear Him". And when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We saved those who had forbidden evil and seized those who wronged, with a wretched punishment, because they were defiantly disobeying. So, when they were insolent about that which they had been forbidden, We said to them, "Be apes, despised" (Qur'an 7:163-166).

Allah also says in the Qur'an, "Say, "Shall I inform you of (what is) worse than that as penalty from Allah? (It is fate of) those whom Allah has cursed and with whom He became angry and made of them apes and pigs and slaves of taghut. Those are worse in position and further astray from the sound way". (Qur'an 5:60).

The verses refer to an incident of a small fishing community among Bani Israel. Due to their persistent disobedience and stubbornness, Allah decreed many strict injunctions to them (as a punishment for their rebellious behaviour but also as a means for them to cleanse their sins). These injunctions and rules constituted a trial for Bani Israel. One of these injunctions was the observance of the Sabbath (Saturday), as a day devoted to prayer. Bani Israel were completely prohibited from doing any work or even lighting a fire on Saturdays. For this fishing village, it meant that they were not allowed to fish on Saturdays.

This injunction was particularly difficult to comply with. The seas in which they fished, proved to be poor fishing ground for six days of the week. But on every Saturday all types of fish would appear in the same sea and were so abundant that they could even be seen playing at the surface. On all other days, the same fish would be out of sight and fishermen would come back empty handed. The appearance of plentiful fish was a trial from Allah to test their faith. This led people to respond in three different manners, thus dividing them into three types:

1. Sinners

They were those who disobeyed the commands of Allah, about Sabbath. They were greatly frustrated. They could not tolerate the observance of Sabbath any longer. But at the same time, they did not want to demonstrate outright disobedience. Therefore, they devised a scheme to circumvent Allah's order. They would lay out their fishing traps on Fridays. Fish which visited on Saturdays were caught in the traps. On Sundays, the fishermen would collect the fish. In doing so, they deliberately disobeyed Allah, even if technically they did not fish on Saturdays. Fish, in fact were caught through their trickery and deception. They knew that they were breaching the observance of Sabbath, in substance. As time passed, they became more daring and flouted Allah's command openly. Finally, the curse and wrath of Allah fell upon them. They were converted into monkeys. This was a unique and unprecedented form of punishment, terrifying and humiliating.

2. Silent Spectators

They were those who did not join with the sinners. But they did not prohibit evil. These people remained silent in the face of all this wrongdoing. They did nothing to reprimand the wrongdoers. They allowed the disobedience to continue, even though they did not actively participate in

such wrongdoings. They also disapproved of people who tried to forbid the wrong actions, asking, "Why do you advise (or warn) a people whom Allah is (about) to destroy or punish with a severe punishment?". Such attitude meant, why bother correcting these people, because Allah will punish them anyway. The punishment also visited the silent spectators.

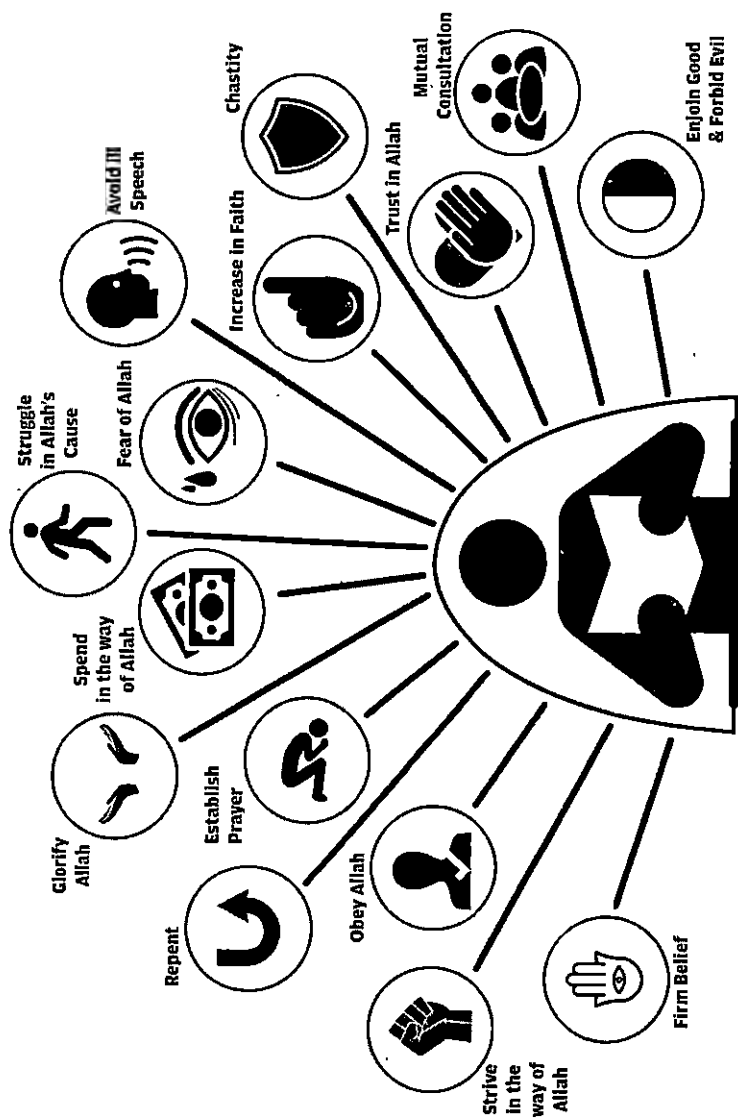
3. Righteous People

They were those who stayed on the path of Allah and actively called upon others to do the same. These people actively disapproved of wrong actions and warned the wrongdoers to rectify their ways before the punishment and torment of Allah fell upon them. The group knew that in the absence of active efforts to stop the wrong, the punishment of Allah would descend upon the whole community, and not just on the wrongdoers. They wanted to clearly disassociate themselves from the disobedient ones and their wrong deeds. They realized that standing by passively would not provide them with an adequate excuse to present before Allah. Week after week, the disobedient fishermen continued to defy Allah's orders. Fearing the punishment of Allah, the righteous continued warning them against such evil actions. They continued to forbid the wrong and command the good. When the punishment struck, these were the only people who were spared from torment.

Conclusion

In the world, we would always find three categories of people. The first category is those who commit sins and disobey Allah. The second category is of those who remain silent and are secluded in their own world. The third category is those of the righteous. They stop people from wrong acts and invite them to good conduct. In order to become a good human being, in the norm set by Allah, it is necessary to be in the third category. If punishment would visit them, both the first and second category of people will have to face the warth, as seen in the Sabbath episode.

Belief and Success



Introduction

Allah says in the Qur'an, "So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are (true) believers" (Qur'an 3:139). The verse states that people should stand firm on true religion and should not weaken their resolve. They should strive to be Momin (True Believers) then they would be victorious. There are many verses in the Qur'an which describe the characteristics of a Momin. See 2:285, 4:162, 8:2-3, 9:71, 9:111-112, 23:1-9, 24:51, 24:62, 27:2-3, 33:36 and 49:15.

Two different terms are used in the Qur'an to describe the believers, one is Muslim and another is Momin. Believer is one who submits to Allah. He believes that Allah is one; offers his prayers and recites Qur'an. He believes in Angels and in the Day of Judgment. He might make mistakes but will not deliberately neglect his duties; worldly charms and allurements will not entice him.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although both are good. Strive to attain that which will benefit you and seek the help of Allah and do not feel helpless" (Muslim). This hadith implies that it is always better to be a strong believer.

Characteristics

The following are the characteristics of a true believer (Momin):

1. Firm Belief (Qur'an 2:285, 4:162, 24:62, 27:3 and 49:15)

Characteristics of a Momin are that he believes in Allah, in His angels, His Books, all His Messengers, and affirms that ultimately one will have to stand before Allah's judgement. These are five fundamental articles of faith in Islam.

2. Obey Allah (Qur'an 2:285, 9:71, 9:112, 24:51 and 33:36)

Momin is obedient to Allah. The proper attitude for a Momin is to cheerfully accept and follow whatever directives he receives from Allah. A Momin sincerely follows the commands of Allah and the messenger. His attitude is to 'hear and obey'. He does not make distinction between His messengers but believes in them all. A Momin believes in what is revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

3. Establish Prayer (Qur'an 4:162, 8:3, 9:71, 9:112, 23:2, 23:9 and 27:3)

Momin performs Salah five times a day, on time, in the best possible manner. It is also important for a believer to be attentive in Salah as he is standing in front of Allah. In order to establish prayer, man will lead a life in obedience of God.

4. Spend in the way of Allah (Qur'an 4:162, 8:3, 9:71, 23:4 and 27:3)

A Momin spends in the way of Allah. Whatever wealth a person has is from Allah, so he should spend it to please Allah. One naturally loves wealth. He will become a true believer when he spends his money in the cause of Allah.

5. Fear of Allah (Implying remembrance of Allah) (Qur'an 8:2)

A Momin is filled with the realization of Allah's greatness. This state of the heart leads to piety, i.e., conduct based on fear of Allah. Believers are keen and intense in their love of Allah. When Allah's name is mentioned, their hearts are filled with awe due to His greatness. The Qur'anic name for such a state is 'taqwa'.

6. Increase in Faith (Qur'an 8:2)

Momin listens attentively to the Qur'an, increasing his faith. Faith resides in the heart. Care should be taken to develop purity of heart, then faith will grow stronger. When

the verses of the Qur'an are read with understanding, the meaning conveyed strengthens faith.

7. Trust in Allah (Qur'an 8:2)

A Momin trusts in Allah. The believer should have total trust in Allah, the One and the Pure, free from all conceivable associations. Such trust is reflected in good deeds performed by a believer.

8. Enjoin Good and Forbid Evil (Qur'an 9:71)

A Momin is duty bound to enjoin good and forbid evil. Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil is his mission which continues throughout life. It is obligatory to invite people to noble deeds, leading to success in this world and the hereafter. Believer should stop people from evil deeds which would lead them to disaster in life hereafter.

9. Strive in the way of Allah (Qur'an 9:111-112 and 49:15)

A Momin is expected to strive in the way of Allah. True believers are ones who strive with their wealth, resources and lives in the cause of Allah. They do not hesitate to strive and fight in the cause of Allah. They do so with utmost courage and exert full effort in resisting the enemy, and overcoming obstacles.

10. Repent (Qur'an 9:112)

A Momin repents when he makes mistakes. When the believers commit any mistake or sin they feel sorry for it and turn towards Allah and beg for his pardon. It is a sincere action where the individual gives up sins and turns towards Allah in the state of obedience.

11. Glorify Allah (Qur'an 9:112)

A Momin glorifies Almighty Allah. Believers are grateful to Allah and they praise Allah alone.

12. Struggle in Allah's Cause (Qur'an 9:112)

A Momin travels across the land, in the cause of Allah. The Believers do not ignore the call of religion. They do not remain confined to their homes and dwellings, but undertake hardships of journey. They wander all over the earth, struggling in the cause of Allah; seeking knowledge, observing the Divine signs, serving people and propagating the religion.

13. Avoid ill Speech (Qur'an 23:3)

A Momin avoids all forms of ill speech. He keeps away from vain and purposeless talk. Believers pay no heed to useless things or conversations and show no inclination or interest in them. If by chance they see aimless and frivolous activities, they keep away and avoid them scrupulously, meeting them with indifference.

14. Chastity (Qur'an 23:5)

A Momin guards his private parts. Believers keep away from illegitimate gratification of their desires. They observe the norms of modesty and keep hiding their private parts. They are modest in every sense of the word. They do not indulge in abuse or perversion.

15. Mutual Consultation (Qur'an 24:62)

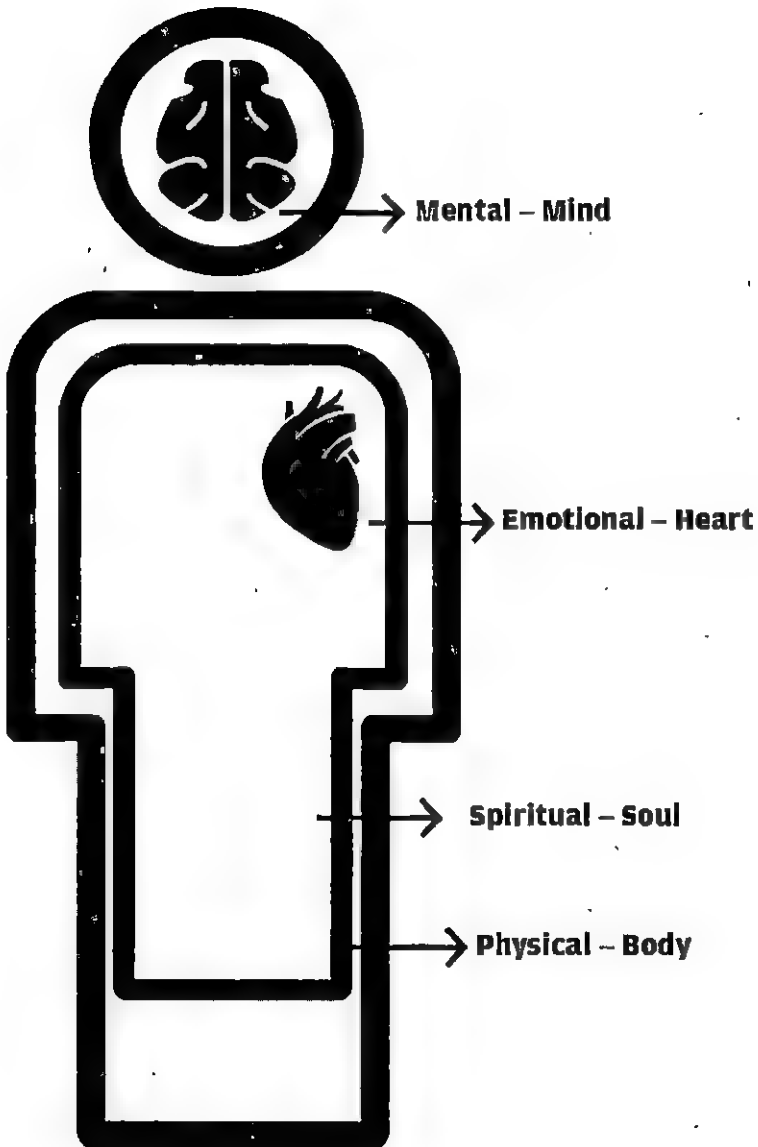
Believers conduct collective affairs by consultation and follow the etiquette of consultation. Whenever a meeting is called to discuss some collective matter, such meetings are to be given due importance. Demand of the faith is that one should attend such a meeting and must not leave in the middle, without permission.

Conclusion

In many verses in the Qur'an, Allah has described the reward which will be given to True Believer. "Those are the believers, truly. For them are degrees (of high position) with their Lord and forgiveness and noble provision"

(Qur'an 8:4). "... For them is forgiveness and noble provision" (Qur'an 8:74). "...Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise" (Qur'an 9:71). "Those are the inheritors, who will inherit al-Firdaus. They will abide therein eternally" (Qur'an 23:10-11). Thus, when people become true believers, Allah would reward them and grant them victory in this world as well.

Holistic View of Personality



Introduction

Comprehensive development of personality is based on clarity of concepts. Each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through his relation with his creator and his connection to the human community, the natural world, and also his own self. Holistic personality development focuses on a person's intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual potential. The goal is to transform an individual into the very best person one can be. To develop oneself, one should be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to different aspects of personality. Without truly knowing oneself, one cannot hope to improve.

All-round personality development implies giving adequate attention to all aspects of personality. One needs to introspect to find out weaknesses and take remedial steps. Islam focuses on continuous growth in all aspects of human personality. The objective is to become a good and successful human being. Prophet (pbuh) has pointed out that, "He whose two days are equal, is a loser" (Daiylami).

Elements

The following are the elements of holistic personality development:

1. Mental – (Related to Mind)

Basic factor of holistic personality development is mental. For mental growth of the human beings, Allah has provided guidance in the Qur'an, which can be absorbed through reading. First command given in the Qur'an was to read. When one reads, one learns and rightly guided learning helps him become a better person. Continuous reading contributes to growth of personality.

Seeking knowledge has a significant importance in Islam as it positively contributes to the mental growth of personality. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) always encouraged his companions to seek knowledge. Prophet said, "Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim" (Bukhari). Thus it is

obligatory to gain knowledge. Muslims should exercise their minds and seek knowledge and discover new things.

Among the various sources of knowledge, the most reliable source is the Qur'an. Prophet Muhammed said, "O Abu Dharr, if you learn one verse from the Book of Allah (Qur'an), it is better for you than to voluntarily pray one hundred rakahs; and if you learn a category of knowledge (religion), regardless if it is applied or not, it is better for you than to voluntarily pray one thousand rakahs" (Ibn Majah).

After Qur'an, the next source of knowledge is the life of Prophet Muhammad, as the Qur'an has itself said, "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern..." (Qur'an 33:21). In the last sermon, Prophet said, "I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and my example, the Sunnah, and if you follow these, you will never go astray" (Bukhari). From this we can learn that after Qur'an, one should look towards the life of Prophet to gain knowledge.

2. Emotional – (Related to Heart)

An important factor of holistic personality development is emotional. The Qur'an and life of Prophet provide guidance for emotional growth. When a person is able to gain control over emotions, he would be a successful personality. The following suggestions help a person to be strong emotionally.

Positive emotions are love, hope, enthusiasm and determination. They are strongly encouraged in the Qur'an and teachings of Prophet. They promote positive attitude in a Muslim; at home, in public, and in relation to all creation. Prophet said, "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (Bukhari and Muslim). The trait indicates a very positive state of mind. Affection is recognized as a noble emotion. Marriage of man and woman is sustained by mutual love; leading to

long term bond; rather than mere satisfaction of momentary urges.

On the other hand, anger, depression, hate and envy are discouraged. A Muslim is advised to exercise strict control over such destructive emotions. He should repent for deeds motivated by such emotions. To do so, one should maintain strong relation with Allah and seek strength and support from Him all the time. If one believes in all-wise, all-knowing Allah ruling the universe and, in His plan, then there would be no place for despair, envy or depression.

Prophet said, "The strong are not the best wrestlers. Verily, the strong are only those who control themselves when they are angry" (Bukhari and Muslim). Controlling one's anger is a sign of strength. Prophet Muhammed gave a remedy to control one's anger if aroused. He said, "If anger arouses anyone, he should sit down and if that does not help, he should lie down" (Tirmidhi).

A person's emotional strength can be gauged by willingness to forgive people when angry. Allah says in the Qur'an, "... and who restrain anger and who pardon the people and Allah loves the doers of good" (Qur'an 3:134). "So, by mercy from Allah, (O Muhammad), you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude (in speech) and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in important matters. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely (upon Him)" (Qur'an 3:159). "Keep to forgiveness, and enjoin what is fair, and turn away from the ignorant" (Qur'an 7:199).

When Prophet was stoned in Taif and was bleeding profusely, the angel of mountains came to him and said, "Your Lord has ordered me to place myself at your command, order me and I will bring together the two mountains on either side of the valley of Taif and all those who tormented you will be wiped out". Prophet told him, "Allah did not send me to kill people. Allah sent me to

guide people to that which is pleasing to Him. It is my hope from my Lord that even though, they did not accept my message today, their descendants will accept it one day". Such was the greatness of Prophet (pbuh) whose forgiveness and mercy are an example for all times.

Islam discourages despair and depression. The world is created to test people as to which of them are best in deeds. When we face any difficulty, we should never be sad but have hope in Allah. Allah quotes the Prophet, "... Do not grieve; indeed, Allah is with us ..." (Qur'an 9:40). Whenever we face problems, we need to put our trust in Allah. Trust in Allah will bring peace and stability of heart. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Indeed, with hardship (will be) ease" (Qur'an 94:6). "Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds (that) for them, there is forgiveness and great reward" (Qur'an 5:9).

3. Spiritual – (Related to Soul)

A crucial factor of holistic personality development is spiritual. Spiritual development leads a man closer to Allah. Islam has prescribed ways to improve the level of spirituality.

i. Obligatory Salah

In order to become spiritual, one needs to get closer to Allah. Salah helps us doing so. One of the important acts of Salah is prostration and it takes a person closer to Allah, as Prophet (pbuh) has said, "The closest that a servant is to his Lord is when he is in prostration" (Muslim). Performing Salah also helps a person remember Allah. It develops sense of duty making him God conscious. Ultimately, performing Salah helps a person keep away from sin. The Qur'an says, "...Indeed Salah prohibits immorality and wrongdoing..." (Qur'an 29:45).

ii. Fasting

Allah says in the Qur'an, "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous" (Qur'an 2:183). The verse clearly states the objective of fasting. It is to make the person righteous which directly contributes to spirituality of an individual. Thus, Islam has given high importance to fasting. The Qur'an instructs us to fast in the month of Ramadan. From the practice of Prophet we learn that non-obligatory fast for three days in a month is recommended, and also the non obligatory fast on Monday and Thursday.

iii. Hajj

Hajj is spiritual journey, par excellence. It comprises of all elements that make a person spiritually strong. Hajj is a chance to see Islam in actual action. Hajj is an event which demands the sacrifice of money, time and energy. Hajj should remind one about death, especially when one is in the state of Ihram. Hajj reminds one about oneness of the Muslim Ummah. Witnessing all these acts helps a person strengthen his level of spirituality.

iv. Tahajjud

Allah says in the Qur'an, "O you who wrap yourself (in clothing), Arise (to pray) the night, except for a little, Half of it – or subtract from it a little. Or add to it and recite the Qur'an with measured recitation" (Qur'an 73: 1-4). After Prophet Muhammad was appointed as messenger of Allah; he was instructed by Allah to perform Tahajjud Salah. He used to stand in prayer in the night to such an extent that his legs would be swollen. This prayer contributed to the spirituality of Prophet. It made him strong and firm. Tahajjud gets a person closer to Allah. The Prophet said, "The Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven when one-third of the night remains and says, 'Who will call upon Me, that I may answer Him? Who will ask of

Me, that I may give him? Who will seek My forgiveness, that I may forgive him?" (Bukhari and Muslim).

v. Observing Seclusion (I'tikaf)

I'tikaf is performed in the last ten days of Ramadan. Laylat-ul-Qadr is the blessed night occurring in this period. I'tekaf helps a person become spiritually strong. He leaves the usual world outside and only focuses on worship, while staying in the mosque, remembering Allah.

vi. Remembering Allah

Prophet would give suggestions to improve the spirituality of the companions. Ali and Fatima did not have any maid because of which they had to do all the household work themselves. Her hands became covered in calluses as she turned the millstone; also her back was stressed due to the burden of carrying water. Meanwhile some prisoners of war were brought to Madina. The Prophet gave them to many Muslims, as slaves. Ali asked Fatima to go to the Prophet and request for a maid. Prophet declined and said, "Fatima, fear Allah and be faultless in all your duties to Him. I will tell you something (to ease your burden). When you go to bed, say *Subhan Allah* (All glory be to Allah), *Al-hamdu lil-Allah* (All praise be to Allah), and *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the greatest) 33 times each. This is better for you than having a maid" (Bukhari). Thus, Prophet gave them a spiritual gift much better than a maid.

4. Physical – (Related to Body)

An indispensable factor of holistic personality development is physical. Fulfilling the obligations of Islam satisfactorily, requires sound health and fitness. The daily performance of five prayers is also good for one's health; its prescribed movements involve all the muscles and joints of the body. Good health is necessary if one intends to fast in the month of Ramadan or perform Hajj. Hajj is a hard task that requires many days of hard physical exertion.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess" (Qur'an 7:31). The Prophet said, "The believer eats to fill one intestine and the disbeliever eats to fill seven" (Muslim). "Eating too much is misfortune" (Bayhaqi). "Food for one is enough for two and food for two is enough for three and food for three is enough for four" (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai and Ibn Majah). Qur'an and the hadith point out that one should eat in moderation, which would ultimately contribute to good health.

Physical fitness is essential for efficiency. A strong and healthy person would be more productive and efficient than a weak man. Daughter of Shoeb said to her father, about Musa, "O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy" (Qur'an 28:26). Thus, a person should possess strength as it would help him be diligent, efficient and effective.

Fasting helps a person be physically fit. Fasting was a practice that the Prophet would do not just during Ramadan, but also as non obligatory fasting on Monday, Thursday, and on 13th, 14th and 15th of every Islamic month. Prophet advised his followers, to be energetic, and to start their day early, all of which are conditions for a healthy body. He said "O Allah, make the early morning hours blessed for my people" (Ahmad). Prophet said, "Any action without the remembrance of Allah is either a diversion or heedlessness excepting four acts, walking from target to target (during archery practice), training a horse, playing with one's family, and learning to swim" (At-Tabarani).

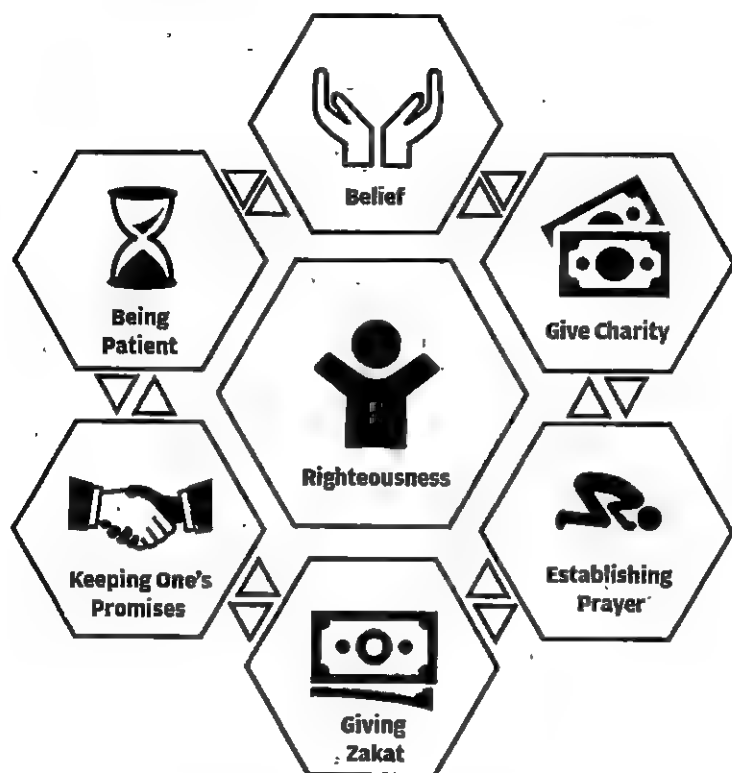
The Prophet and his companions were part of an environment that helped them being physically fit. Life was tougher, long distances were covered on foot, men hunted and farmed for food. There were no sedentary recreations to induce laziness and wastage of time. A truly health conscious person blends diet, nutrition and exercise with an intention to fulfil all his religious obligations.

Umar was concerned about people's health. He would warn them against the consequences and dangers of obesity and would advise them to lose weight, because that would give them strength to strive and fulfil their duties. He used to say: "You people, beware of eating too much, for it makes you lazy in prayer, is bad for your body and causes sickness. Allah does not approve of obesity. Rather you should be moderate in your eating, for that is closer to righteousness and away from extravagance. It makes you stronger to worship Allah. No person will be doomed unless he gives precedence to his desires, over his religious commitments". In order to encourage physical fitness, games and sports ought to be organised. Rigorous training is to be provided for running, swimming, throwing of darts, horse riding, etc.

Conclusion

Islam's holistic approach to growth of personality covers all aspects; mind, body, heart and soul. Islam encourages attitudes and actions which refresh and revitalise mind, body, heart and soul. Actions should not lead to sin, or cause harm; or cause delay in religious obligations. The tradition of Prophet undoubtedly encourages useful activities which promote healthy lifestyle. If one wants to positively contribute to society, then one should be mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically fit. Thus, one should strive for fitness in all four dimensions.

Hexagon Model of Righteousness



Introduction

For noble deeds, Allah uses the word 'Bir' in the Qur'an. It implies due regard to rights of Allah, as well as the rights of other beings, besides all kinds of righteous acts. The word 'Bir' is translated as 'Righteousness'. Noble actions ensure that human heart is at ease. Sincere 'Iman' leads to deeds that bring one closer to Allah. Bir includes virtues like truth, obedience to Allah, piety and good conduct. 'Bir' refers to acts of worship and obedience to Allah. Prophet said, "Righteousness is good character ..." (Muslim).

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but (true) righteousness is (in) one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller, those who ask (for help), and for freeing slaves; (and who) establishes prayer and gives zakah; (those who) fulfill their promise when they promise; and (those who) are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous" (Qur'an 2:177). Turning one's face towards the east or the west is mentioned here only by way of illustration. The actual purpose of the verse is to emphasize that the observance of certain outward religious rites is not enough. Rather, one should be righteous in the true sense. The verse lists six aspects which need attention.

Aspects of Righteousness

The following are the various aspects of Righteousness:

1. Belief

The basis of righteousness is belief. One should have belief in Allah, the Last Day, Angels, the Books and Prophets. Allah sends his books to Prophets through Angels. Belief is foundation for a person's righteousness. Allah says, "They ask you (O Muhammad), about the new moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj". And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back door, but righteousness is (in) one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their (front) doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed" (Qur'an 2:189). The verse gives another illustration (of a rite). It says that one should fear Allah and piety would lead to success.

2. Give Charity

Another requirement of righteousness is to give charity. The verse mentions categories of people on whom, one should spend. They are one's relatives, the orphans, and the needy. Also, one should spend money on those who ask and for freeing slaves. Allah says, "Never will you attain the righteousness until you spend (in the way of Allah) from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it" (Qur'an 3:92). Usually what a person loves the most is money; so, one should spend money in the way of Allah.

3. Establishing Prayer

An important element of righteousness is to establish prayer. It is the second pillar of Islam. It is essential for a man to perform Salah five times a day, on time and with Jamaat. For a person to become righteous, God consciousness is an absolute requirement, and Salah helps a person increase the level of God consciousness.

4. Giving Zakah

Another requirement of righteousness is to give zakah. Poor should be helped monetarily. One should spend on the needy, even if when it is not obligatory. Obligatory Zakat is the minimum which Islam demands from Muslims. Zakat is mandatory on every Muslim who is financially sound and has money (including gold, silver, cattle, and goods for trade) above a particular limit. Offering Zakah not only helps the poor, but it also ensures inflow of money into the economy. It helps one control the love for money and possessions.

5. Keeping One's Promise

A symbol of righteousness is to fulfil one's promise. Commitments should be honoured. Keeping promises shows that the person is truthful and honest. Promises are made during business or any kind of transactions. Keeping

them means that one is trustworthy. Honouring one's promise will not only improve the spiritual status of a person; it will also enhance his image and reputation in society.

6. Being Patient

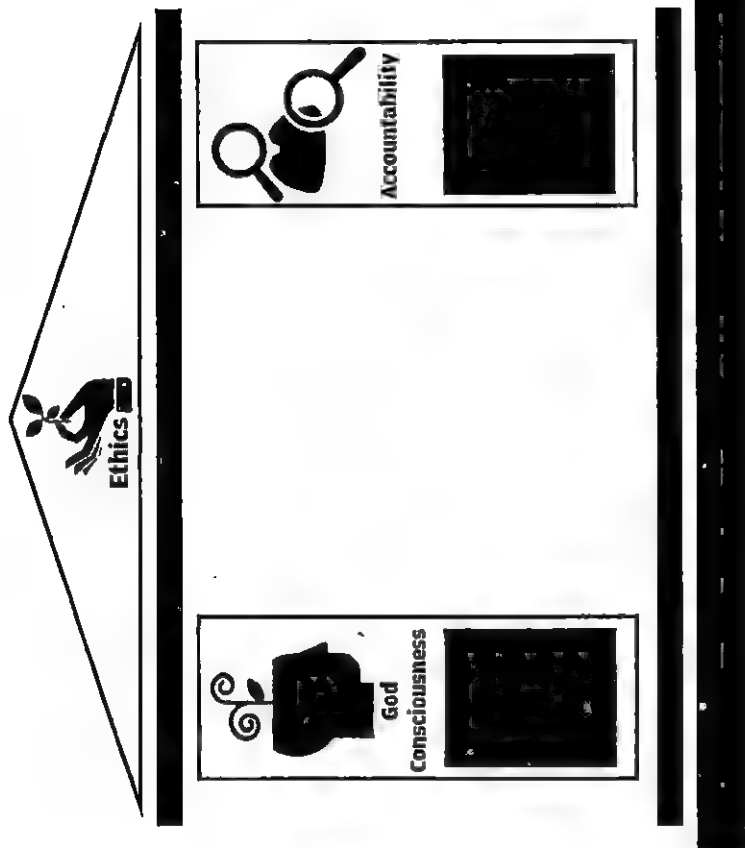
To be righteous, one should cultivate patience. The verse mentions three occasions on which a person needs to maintain patience, while in poverty, in hardship and during battle. When a person is inflicted with poverty, he might not have money for his basic needs but he must not cross ethical limits. When a person suffers from physical discomfort or mental stress, he needs to be firm. War is a situation of fear and stress; a warrior will need to be courageous on that occasion as well.

Conclusion

Righteousness is not only about counselling others to be virtuous. Rather, one should first be righteous oneself. Allah says, "Do you order righteousness to people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?" (Qur'an 2:44). Of course, one should help others in being righteous. Allah says, "... And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty" (Qur'an 5:2).

Righteousness is required, both in action and words. When one speaks, it should benefit people and should promote virtue. Allah says, "O you who have believed, when you converse privately, do not converse about sin and aggression and disobedience to the Messenger but converse about righteousness and piety. And fear Allah, to Whom you will be gathered" (Qur'an 58:9). Thus, righteousness ultimately helps a person acquire character, as pointed out by the Prophet (pbuh).

Accountability and Ethics



Introduction

Ethics is about distinction between right and wrong. It presents the criterion to distinguish good from bad. Ethical behaviour is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching, and even when wrong doing is legally

permissible. It is easy to be virtuous when one is with people but one's conduct in private constitutes the real test. It would be difficult to motivate an individual to behave ethically unless there is a strong foundation of belief. If people start behaving ethically and responsibly, many problems will be solved and crime rate would reduce. In order to inspire people to behave ethically, Islam offers two important qualities to be cultivated; which act as pillars for ethical behaviour.

1. God Consciousness

God Consciousness is both an attitude and a process. It is the proper attitude of the human toward the Divine. It encompasses love, devotion, and fear. Allah's mercy and kindness make life worth living. He alone is to be worshipped due to His boundless wisdom and majesty. One would invite punishment for failing in obedience to Him.

The attitude of God Consciousness does not remain hidden in the human heart but is revealed in expression and action. The attitude is seen in the noble and true character it nurtures and is reflected in the commitment to sublime values such as courage, generosity, compassion, honesty, integrity and cooperation in pursuit of the right.

God Consciousness initiates the process by which believers internalize the sublime values emphasized by revelation and hence develop their character. Qur'an reminds believers that religious practices are not merely outward physical actions. One should always remember that religious practices, like praying and fasting, ultimately aim at bringing about moral and spiritual uplift. Allah says in the Qur'an, "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but (true) righteousness is (in) one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller, those who ask (for help), and for freeing slaves; (and who) establishes prayer and gives zakah; (those who) fulfill their

promise when they promise; and (those who) are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous" (Qur'an 2:177).

Allah has given the good tidings of reward in this world and the hereafter, to people who are God Conscious. Allah says in the Qur'an, "... Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the (best) outcome is for the God Conscious" (Qur'an 7:128). "... Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you ..." (Qur'an 49:13). "... And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out. And will provide for him where he does not expect ..." (Qur'an 65:2-3).

Salah is ordained to help people become God Conscious; that is the reason Salah is made obligatory on every Muslim. Man is forgetful, hence regular reminders are required so that he becomes God Conscious. Being in Allah's presence, one gets strength to avoid whatever may displease Him. We cannot practice Islam unless we believe that Allah is seeing us all the time and everywhere. Allah sees us even in darkness, and Allah is with us, even when we are alone. It is possible to hide from the world but not from Allah. One might avoid punishment given by human beings but not His punishments.

It is this awareness, this feeling, this belief, which restrains man from disobeying God and which motivates him to observe all ethical limits, Allah has laid down. Without this awareness, one cannot be Muslim. Allah has enjoined upon us to perform Salah five times a day, to keep alive this awareness in the hearts of the faithful. He says in the Qur'an, "...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do" (Qur'an 29:45).

This awareness becomes deeply embedded through Salah. Maulana Maududi gives a very good example in this regard. We may perform Salah only when we are clean and

have done ablution. But who (except Allah) knows whether one has actually washed oneself and that clothes are indeed clean. Or is one just pretending to have performed ablution? But believer never cheats because he is sure that his actions will not be hidden from Allah. Similarly, no one will know if one does not, in fact, recite Qur'anic verses in Salah, while praying silently. But one does not cheat in this way, because one believes that Allah hears everything; He is closer to us than the jugular vein. We perform Salah even when we are alone, although there would be nobody to know that we had not actually performed it. One fully realizes that it is impossible to hide any disobedience from Him.

Thus, Salah evokes and sustains in the heart of man fear of Allah and the belief that he lives in His presence. How can we worship and serve Allah and remain loyal to Him, throughout the twenty-four hours of day and night, unless fear of Allah and ethical awareness is revived continuously in our hearts. Devoid of this feeling, how can we embrace nobility and avoid evil in our daily lives? Making us ever-conscious of Allah is a blessing of Salah.

The third pillar of Islam is fasting in the month of Ramadan. The purpose of fasting is to make people God conscious, as Allah says in the Qur'an, "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may attain God consciousness" (Qur'an 2:183).

Through fasting, Allah puts Muslims to test, to gauge their faith for a full month every year. As we emerge successful in this trial; our faith becomes firmer and deeper. Fasting is both trial and training. If we deposit anything on trust with someone, we are, as it were, testing his integrity. If he does not abuse our trust, he passes his test and also develops strength to bear burden of greater trust in future. Similarly, Allah puts our faith through test for one month, many long hours a day. If one emerges triumphant, more strength develops in one to refrain from sins.

2. Accountability

Allah says in the Qur'an, "The Day every soul will find what it has done of good present (before it). And also, what it has done of evil. It will wish that between itself and that (evil) was a great distance. And Allah warns you of Himself, and Allah is Kind to (His) servants" (Qur'an 3:30). "Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your (full) compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So, he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained (his goal). And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion" (Qur'an 3:185). As these two verses illustrate, on this day, people will be resurrected and then will be asked about their lives, after which their final destination will be determined.

One of the most important aspects of Islam is the belief in Day of Judgment. It is one of the six articles of faith and is central to the Islamic concept of accountability. The present life is not the goal; rather, it is the life after death that is the focus. Muslims should be conscious of God in all aspects of their life; knowing that they will be asked about their actions and attitudes.

The Day of Judgement is mentioned in many verses of the Qur'an. It has more than one name, including the Day of Accountability, Day of Resurrection, the Hour, and the Last Day. Each of the names highlights a particular aspect. The Day of Judgment underscores the belief in accountability before God and induces God consciousness. It is for this reason that there are detailed descriptions of this day in the Qur'an.

Conclusion

Nothing empowers a community to a greater extent than development of moral character of its members. By internalizing the moral values given by revelation, people can lead a harmonious life, based on mutual respect and cooperation. Life will be characterized by honest and fair

dealings, commitment to duty and attention to justice. Life based on God Consciousness and sense of accountability leads to strength and prosperity. God consciousness inspires a person to behave in an ethical manner.

Destination of Paradise



Introduction

Prophet (pbuh) said, "Guarantee six things and I guarantee you Jannah. Whenever you speak, say the truth. Fulfil your promises when you make them. When you are entrusted with something, honour that trust. Safeguard your

private parts, lower your gaze and prevent your hands from harming others” (Baihaqi). Prophet also said, “Whoever can guarantee (the proper use of) what is between his two jaw-bones (i.e. his tongue) and what is between his two legs (i.e. his private parts), I guarantee Paradise for him” (Bukhari). With the help of these two narrations, we can make a list of desirable traits to develop our personality; to enter Paradise.

Aspects

The following attributes would lead to Paradise:

1. Proper Use of Tongue

Muadh ibn Jabal reported that the Prophet said, “Shall I not tell you about the head of the matter (i.e. religion) and its peak?” I said, “Of course, O Messenger of Allah”. The Prophet said, “The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is the prayer, and jihad is its peak. Shall I not tell you how to achieve all of this?” I said, “Of course, O Prophet of Allah”. The Prophet took hold of his tongue and he said, “Restrain this.” I said, “O Prophet of Allah, will we be held accountable for what we say?” The Prophet said, “May your mother be bereaved of you, O Muadh, Is there anything that topples people onto their faces into the Hellfire except the harvest of their tongues?” (Tirmidhi). The hadith states that in order to follow and achieve the purpose of religion, one should have control over one’s tongue. This shows the importance of using tongue in the right manner.

With reference to the use of tongue, Prophet said, “He who truly believes in Allah and the last day should speak good or keep silent” (Bukhari and Muslim). Prophet said “He who keeps silent, remains safe” (Tirmidhi). Many wrong deeds are committed through tongue.

i. Lying

A person should be honest and should always speak the truth. Prophet said, "Surely truth leads to virtue, and virtue leads to Paradise" (Bukhari).

Allah says in the Qur'an, "That (has been commanded), and whoever honours the sacred ordinances of Allah - it is best for him in the sight of his Lord. And permitted to you are the grazing livestock, except what is recited to you. So avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement" (Qur'an 22:30).

Telling something which is not correct or not true is a sin. Prophet said, "Woe to him who tells lies to make people laugh, Woe to him, Woe to him" (Ahmad and Tirmidhi). "It is great treachery that you tell your brother something he accepts as truth from you, but you are lying" (Abu Dawood).

ii. Harsh Voice

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys" (Qur'an 31:19). Unseemly and harsh voice puts a person in poor light. Nobody likes to hear the voice of a donkey. Then why a man, who has moral sense, should sound like a donkey. Using polite voice is a means of creating good feelings in listeners. A harsh voice would break hearts and spoil relationships. Thus it is necessary to employ a polite tone while speaking.

iii. Backbiting

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother, when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful" (Qur'an 49:12). The most significant part of the verse is that backbiting is related to eating the flesh of one's own brother. It is an act which no one would like to

do. Thus, reference to 'flesh of his brother' signifies how dirty the sin is in the sight of Allah.

iv. Spreading Rumours without Confirming

Allah says in the Qur'an, "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful" (Qur'an 49:6). Prophet said, "It is enough sin for a man to speak of everything that he hears" (Muslim). It is necessary to confirm the information which people receive and they only need to forward it after getting confirmation. Usually a person hears truth as well as lies, so if he speaks of everything that he hears, he is lying by reporting things that did not happen. He need not lie deliberately, still he might end up being a liar.

2. Keeping One's Promises

Fulfilling promises is a characteristic of the believer and a sign among the many signs of a person who fears Allah. The true believers aren't known to break their promises or breach their contracts, oaths or pledges. Honouring a promise or pledge is the foundation of Muslim society. Included in them are all contracts of trade and business. Each such dealing done properly, promotes prosperity of the community. If promise is broken then trust is destroyed, consequently mutual relations are broken.

3. Honouring Trusts

This is among the greatest traits of good character. Allah likes those who carry out responsibilities assigned to them. A responsible person shows his complete faith by commitment to duty. Trustworthy conduct preserves Deen, honour and wealth. The Prophet said, "The believer is one whom people trust with their life and wealth" (Nasai). Therefore, if mutual trust exists in the community,

its unity is strengthened and ties grow stronger; good feelings prevail and spread.

4. Protecting Private Parts

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And do not approach illegitimate sexual relations. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way" (Qur'an 17:32). The most significant part of the verse is Allah's injunction that one should not even approach unlawful sexual intimacy. One should abstain from all possible routes which lead man to improper behaviour.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "The (unmarried) woman or (unmarried) man found guilty of illegitimate sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in (a matter concerning) the religion of Allah, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a group of believers witness their punishment" (Qur'an 24:2). The Qur'an not only prohibits the wrong use of private organs but also prescribes the punishment for those who do so; this shows the intensity of the sin.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And they (the believers) guard their private parts. Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for indeed, they will not be blamed (within this circle). But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors" (Qur'an 23:5-7). The people are basically commanded to refrain from what is prohibited. When one safeguards private parts, one protects lineage, purity in society and ensures security against evil.

5. Lowering One's Gaze

Allah says, "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts ..." (Qur'an 24:30-31). It basically implies not looking at things which are prohibited. Lowering the gaze

has many benefits; it gives a person the light and sweetness of faith. Furthermore, lowering the gaze strengthens the heart, purifies the soul and sets it straight. Through lowering the glance, a person is protected from sin. Seeing improperly might lead to adultery and lowering of gaze helps to abstain from the grave sin.

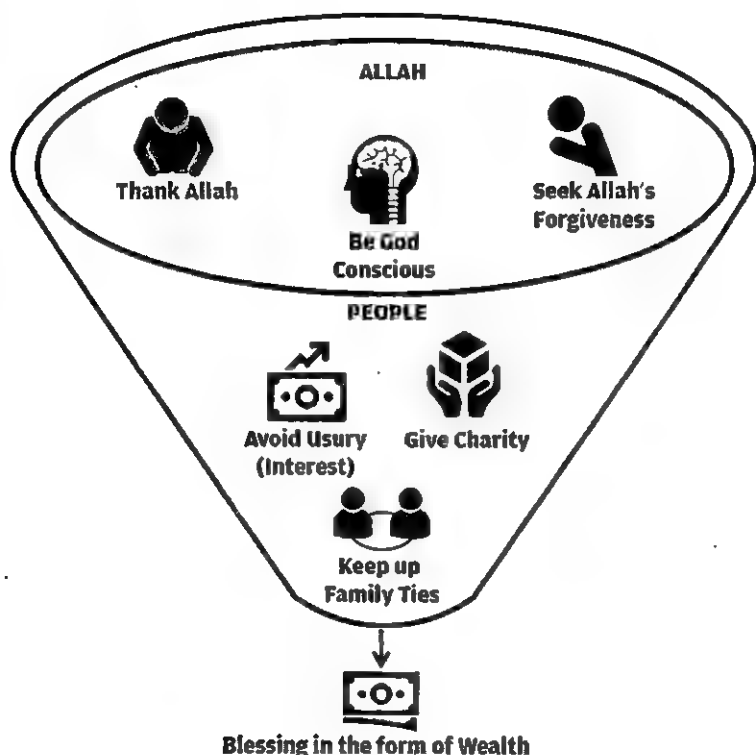
6. Restraining One's Hand from Harming Others

It means that we restrain our hands from harming people, transgressing against them or causing them injury in any way. The person who harms people is disliked by Allah and also by people. This is a sign of bad character and personality. A good person refrains from harming others; this shows that he is well behaved, has good manners and possesses piety. Allah has prepared great fortune for those who don't harm people. By not causing harm, one would not sin and get a black mark on his deed list. This conduct would enable him to enter paradise. Prophet (pbuh) said, "A man while walking along a path, saw the branches of a tree lying there. He thought, 'By Allah, I shall remove these from this road, so that they may not harm the Muslims, and (for this good deed) he was admitted to Paradise'" (Muslim).

Conclusion

Prophet said, "I guarantee a house on the outskirts of Paradise for one who withdraws from (rancorous) argument even if he is right. I promise a house in the middle of Paradise for one who abandons lies even when joking, and a house in the highest part of Paradise for one who makes his character excellent" (Abu Dawood). Everyone would like to be in the highest part of paradise, and it can happen only by having an excellent character, and such a character can be developed by imbibing the six qualities mentioned above. The path to Paradise is simple, it is up to us to follow it before it's too late.

Wealth Generation



Introduction

People generally want to become rich. If proper means are used, Islam does not discourage them. Indeed, Islam provides guidelines to maximise their blessings. Then Islam guides people to use their wealth in the right manner; as they will be questioned about it, on the day of judgement. Wealth is required to live a comfortable, safe and secure life. Wealth is an important factor in one's life. When one has means, one would have peace of mind and be in a position to strive in the way of Allah.

Obligations

One should meet one's obligations to get blessings of Allah:

1. Relationship with Allah

i. Thank Allah

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you (in favour); but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe'" (Qur'an 14:7). Gratefulness essentially implies proper attitude. Everything man gets, he must consider it as blessing from Allah. A feeling of indebtedness and gratitude must be generated in his heart; and he should adopt an attitude of loyalty, worship and obedience towards his real benefactor. When the individual adopts this attitude of gratefulness towards Allah, then he deserves greater reward and thus Allah would increase his blessings on the person.

ii. Seek Allah's Forgiveness

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send (rain from) the sky upon you in (continuing) showers And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers'" (Qur'an 71:10-12). Human beings tend to make mistakes. Sometime we make mistakes without deliberation and intention, but sometimes knowingly. To err is human and to forgive is divine. As human beings, we are responsible, but we also make mistakes and we are constantly in need of forgiveness. Thus, Islam teaches people to always seek forgiveness from Allah. Allah has promised various bounties such as rain, wealth, children, gardens and rivers; to those who repent from sins and seek forgiveness from the Almighty.

iii. Be God Conscious

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out And will provide for him from where he does not expect ..." (Qur'an 65:2-3). For some people, life might be difficult as earning money might not be easy for them. For the pious, Allah will surely open avenues for earning livelihood; which they would not have imagined. Allah opens up such sources of income which are never thought about, by man. Man should always expect blessings of Allah.

2. People

i. Avoid Usury (Interest)

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Allah destroys interest and gives increase for charities. And Allah does not like any sinning disbeliever" (Qur'an 2:276). An important fact stated in this verse describes spiritual, economic and social benefits of charity. Wealth apparently multiplies through interest and shrinks as a result of charity, but in actual fact, the opposite is the case. By God's decree, the law of nature is such that interest only serves as strain on economic, moral and spiritual development. It hinders social and economic growth; it causes actual regression and decline. When we avoid usury that destroys our economy, then prosperity would increase.

ii. Give Charity

Prophet (pbuh) has said, "Allah says, 'Spend Oh son of Adam, and I shall spend on you'" (Bukhari and Muslim), Prophet has also said, "Charity does not reduce wealth" (Muslim). Charity is the outcome of generosity, compassion, large-heartedness and magnanimity, with the result that practice of charity promotes these qualities.

General attitude of prosperous members of a society should encourage charity. Within their means, they should spend generously on their own requirements and on the requirements of their family. Then they should devote the

surplus to help the poor. They may use their funds to provide interest-free loans for business. They may themselves invest in business with the stipulation to share, in both profit and loss. They may deposit funds with the government, so that it may use them on projects of public welfare. A little reflection will make it obvious that trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will attain maximum prosperity; the standard of living will continually rise as production increases.

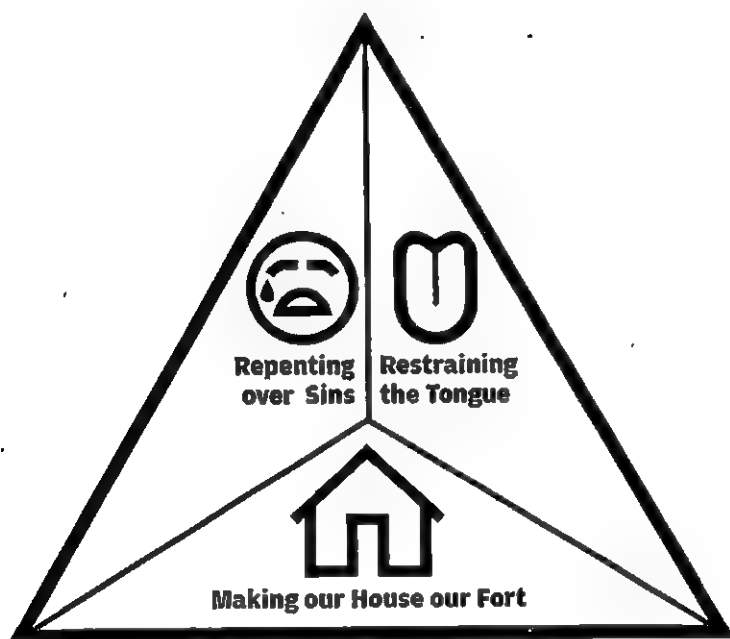
iii. Keep up Family Ties

Prophet said, "Whoever would like his provision increased and his life extended, should uphold ties of kinship" (Bukhari and Muslim). The hadith gives a simple formula to increase one's provisions; which is to uphold the ties of kinship. Once, a man said to the Prophet "I have relatives with whom I try to keep in touch, but they cut me off. I treat them well, but they abuse me. I am patient and kind towards them, but they insult me". The Prophet said, "If you are as you say, then it is as if you are putting hot dust in their mouths. Allah will continue to support you as long as you continue to do that" (Muslim). This hadith underscores the importance of maintaining relationship with our relatives.

Conclusion

We can divide the above six factors into two groups. Thanking Allah, seeking Allah's forgiveness and being God conscious are qualities in reference to Allah. Avoiding interest, giving charity and keeping family ties intact, are in reference to people. The Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet give us basic methods, through which one may get Allah's blessings. Islam wants Muslims to be successful in this world and the hereafter. It suggests methods to be adopted by people, if they desire success.

Triangle Model of Safety



Introduction

Uqbah ibn Amir related that he once asked the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, what is safety (i.e., how does one achieve safety)?" The Prophet (pbuh) answered, "Hold back your tongue, let your house be sufficient for you and cry over your sins" (Ahmad). From this we learn that the Prophet provided three fold advice. By following his advice, a person would be in a safe zone in every aspect of his life.

Traits

The following traits lead a person to safe zone:

1. Restraining the Tongue

Many sins are committed by tongue, so one should make proper and good use of his tongue. Ability to speak is one of the greatest blessings of Allah. Through speech, one may do great deeds or cause damage. Prophet said, "When the son of Adam (any human) rises in the morning, his body parts call out to the tongue saying "Fear Allah in reference to us, for we are affected by your utterances. If you go steadfast so do we, but if you go astray so do we" (Tirmidhi).

In daily life, we observe people who speak good words which please the listeners. Good speech leads to reform and forbids wrong. Such communication is highly rewarded by Allah. On the other hand, there are people who utter wrong and mischievous words causing harmful effects which might not be realised by them. Allah is not pleased with such a person. Therefore, one should strictly guard one's speech and weigh the words before uttering them; to avoid the wrath of Allah. He would then be in the safe zone.

2. Making the House one's Fort

Men should normally go out of their house only when they have work to do. When they leave the house without any purpose, they would waste their time and indulge in frivolous activities. They might commit sins through their eyes, ears and tongue.

Addressing women, Allah says in the Qur'an, "And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as (was) the display of the former times of ignorance ..." (Qur'an 33:33). The word used in the Qur'an is 'qarna'. In the first sense, it means, "settle down, stick firmly" and in the second sense, "live peacefully, sit with dignity". In both meanings, the verses imply that woman's real sphere of activity is her home; she should carry out her functions within that sphere peacefully, and she should come out of the house only in case of a genuine need. Once a woman made a submission to the Prophet saying, "All kinds of

virtues have been secured by men; they fight and accomplish great deeds in the way of Allah. What should we do that we may also get a reward equal to that of the warriors?" The Prophet replied, "The woman who sits in her house from among you; will attain the reward of the warriors". This does not mean that women should never go out of house. But it means that they should only go out for some useful significant purpose. Staying in the house will keep a person away from many sins and take him to the safe zone.

3. Repenting over Sins

Man is an imperfect being. He tends to commit mistakes and when he seeks forgiveness, the act takes him closer to Allah. Genuine tears of repentance are due to fear of Allah. Repentance is one of the characteristics which make one eligible to get the shade of Allah's throne on the day of judgement, where there will be no shade but His. This action can only happen if one is really God conscious and is grateful for His blessings. Prophet said, "Two eyes will not be touched by fire, an eye that cried from the fear of Allah, and an eye that stayed awake guarding (the Muslim army) for the sake of Allah" (Tirmidhi). This also highlights the importance of tears, induced by fear of Allah.

Crying over sins, is a sign that the person realizes the gravity of previous sins. He is reminded of impending death, followed by ordeal in the grave. The repenting person is concerned about what would happen when he is resurrected. He is apprehensive about hellfire, if he fails in his obligations. The repenting self is aware of the greatness of Allah. Repenting over sins helps a person become strong. He is determined not to repeat the sins and indeed become a better human being; this would lead him to the safe zone.

Conclusion

Every man wants to be in the safe zone always. He would be willing to make all efforts to be in the safe zone. Prophet has given basic advice to people to be safe in this world and in the hereafter. One should control a part of one's body (the tongue). One should repent over sins and make his home conducive for himself. All three suggestions, if implemented would help a person live a safe life.

Human Needs



(Quran 20:118 and 119)

Introduction

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Indeed, it is (promised) for you not to be hungry therein or be unclothed. And indeed, you will not be thirsty therein or be hot from the sun" (Qur'an 20:118 and 119). The two verses refer to distress which, Adam and his wife Hawwa had to undergo, immediately after their expulsion from the Garden. Here instead of mentioning the higher blessings of the Garden,

only four basic necessities are mentioned; namely, food, cloth, water and shelter.

In the Garden all these necessities were available, without any labour from Adam. Due to temptations of Satan, they (Adam and Wife) were deprived not only of these facilities but also of the higher blessings of the Garden. On the earth, they will have to work hard for these necessities; leaving little time and leisure; to strive for higher aims of life. The verses basically speak about four necessities of human beings.

1. Hunger – Food

Food is basic need of man. Food gives energy to work and grow. Food helps one become strong. Food provides nutritional support to an organism. Food is of plant or animal origin, and contains essential nutrients, such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals. Food is ingested by an organism and assimilated by cells to provide energy, maintain life, and stimulate growth. If man does not get food for a few days, he would become weak and soon die.

2. Exposure – Clothing

Another basic need of man is cloth. We need clothes to wear. Clothing helps in protecting the private parts of body. Covering is very important for maintaining decent appearance in public. Clothes protect us from cold and hot climate, rain and dust. One wears cotton clothes in summer, woollen clothes in winter, and needs raincoats and umbrellas in rainy season. To remain clothed is the tradition of all human societies. The type of clothing worn depends on social and geographic conditions. If man does not get the right clothing to suit the climate, he would start feeling uncomfortable. Being without clothes might even cause death.

3. Thirst – Water

A very basic need of man is water. Water is required by human body as it acts as the main component for vital functions. It helps carry nutrients and oxygen to cells and regulates body temperature. It removes waste, cushions and protects body joints and vital organs. It helps the body absorb nutrients and convert food to energy. If a man does not get water, to quench his thirst; he would not survive.

4. Intrusion – Dwellings

A basic need of man is shelter. A shelter is an architectural structure or building that provides protection from environment. A house protects one from various possible harms, caused by heat, snow fall, cold climate, wind, rain, animals or thieves. Shelters give people a feeling of well-being and boost their spirits. Without shelter, people become exhausted and lose their spirit due to prolonged exposure to elements. A shelter generally improves a person's quality of life. When considered as a home, a shelter is also the place where family members interact and children are raised properly. Shelter provides a sense of security, to enable one to focus on higher aspects of life. Shelter provides privacy and independence against unwanted intrusion from the community. If one does not get proper shelter, one's health would suffer and his life would be at risk.

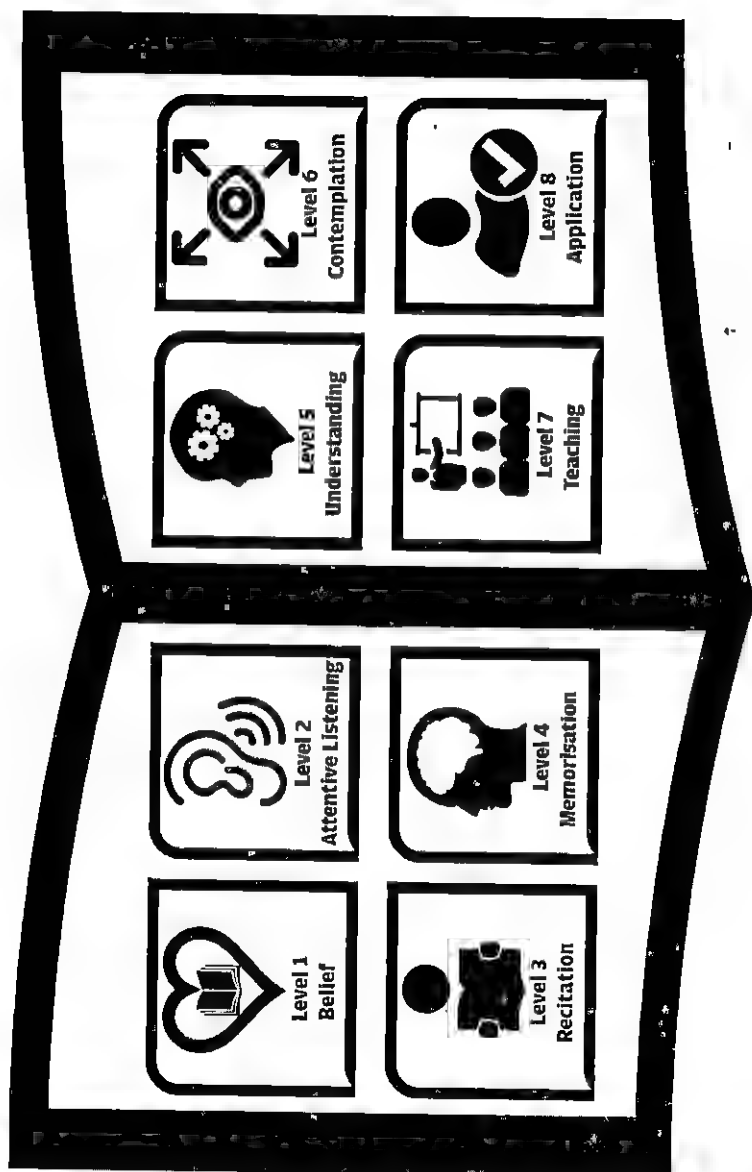
Conclusion

Modern list of basic needs includes a few other items as well; such as, electricity, education and healthcare, but the four things mentioned in the Qur'an remain very basic. They may be termed as physiological needs, as they are physical requirements for survival. If not met, the human body would not function properly and the person will ultimately die. Physiological needs are to be met first.

The Qur'an mentions the four basic needs of food, clothing, water and shelter. Everyone has to work in order

to meet these basic needs. But the purpose of life is not mere fulfilment of basic needs. One should identify the aim of life and work towards it.

Right Conduct



Introduction

Qur'an is Allah's gift to humanity; meant to regulate our lives. It is a book which brings people from darkness to light. Qur'an tells us of rise and fall of nations. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Allah will raise many nations by this book and will lower many" (Muslim). The various levels of relationship with the Qur'an, are mentioned below.

1. Belief

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And (pious are those) who believe in what has been revealed to you, (O Muhammad), and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain (in faith)" (Qur'an 2:4). The first stage of having relationship with the Qur'an is to have belief in it, that it is the final book revealed from Allah, for the entire mankind. One should also believe in all those books which were revealed earlier, to other Prophets.

2. Attentive Listening

Allah says in the Qur'an, "So when the Qur'an is recited, then listen to it and pay attention that you may receive mercy" (Qur'an 7:204). In this verse, believers are instructed to listen with attention, whenever Qur'an is recited. It basically means to listen without speaking, and to devote full attention.

Attentive listening to the Qur'an can be observed in the life of Prophet (pbuh). Once Prophet said to Abdullah ibn Masud, "Recite to me some part of the Qur'an". He replied, "O messenger of Allah, how can I recite it to you whilst it was revealed to you?". The Prophet said, "I love to hear it from others". Abdullah ibn Masood reported, "So I started to read from chapter An-Nisa, until I reached the verse that reads, 'So how will it be when We bring from every nation a witness, and we bring you, O Muhammad, against these people as a witness?'". The Prophet, at this point, said to Abdullah ibn Masud, "This is enough". Abdullah ibn Masud reported, "I looked at the Prophet and he was in

tears" (Bukhari and Muslim). This shows the importance of listening to the Qur'an, when it is recited.

3. Recitation

The Qur'an quotes the Prophet "...And I am commanded to be of the Muslims (those who submit to Allah) And to recite the Qur'an ..." (Qur'an 27:91-92). The verse states that Allah has instructed the Prophet to recite the Qur'an. Allah also says in the Qur'an, "... recite the Qur'an with measured recitation" (Qur'an 73:4). The verse states that the Qur'an should be recited clearly and distinctly.

Allah says, "Indeed, those who recite the Book of Allah and establish prayer and spend (in His cause) out of what We have provided them, secretly and publicly, (can) expect a profit that will never perish" (Qur'an 35:29). The verse promises a profit which will never perish for doing three things, and the first among them is to recite the Qur'an.

Allah mentions tasks performed by the Prophet. (Chapter 62, Verse 2). Among the four tasks, one is to recite verses of the Qur'an to people. Allah says, "It is He who has sent among the unlettered (Arabs), a Messenger from themselves; reciting to them, His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book (i.e., the Qur'an) and wisdom (i.e., the sunnah) – although they were before, in clear error" (Qur'an 62:2).

Teachings of Prophet motivate people to recite the Qur'an. The Prophet said, "Whoever recites a letter from the Qur'an, will be rewarded a good deed and each good deed is multiplied by ten. I do not say "*Alif Lam Mim*" is one letter, but "*Alif*" is a letter, '*Lam*' is a letter and '*Mim*' is a letter" (Tirmidhi).

4. Memorisation

Allah says, "Rather, the Qur'an is distinct verses (preserved) within the breasts of those who have been

given knowledge. And none reject Our verses except the wrongdoers" (Qur'an 29:49). The verse makes it clear that Qur'an is preserved in the hearts of believers, who are considered to have knowledge. The Prophet said, "He who has no Qur'an in his heart is like a house that is destroyed" (Tirmidhi). The hadith clearly distinguishes between people who have memorised the Qur'an and who have not. Distinction is given to the person who memorised the Qur'an, as the Prophet said, "Whoever memorises the first seven long chapters of the Qur'an is a scholar" (Ahmad). "It will be said to the person of the Qur'an, 'Read and ascend and recite how you used to recite, in the world, for your place in Paradise will be at the last verse which you read'" (Tirmidhi). The hadith is a motivation that the grade of a person in Paradise, will be determined by the extent to which he remembers the Qur'an.

5. Understanding

Allah says, "We have made the Qur'an easy to understand, but is there anyone who would pay attention?" (Qur'an 54:17). Allah has told people that the Qur'an has been made easy for people to learn and understand. Allah says, "The month of Ramadhan (is that) in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion ..." (Qur'an 2:183). Everyone should understand the Qur'an, as it is a book for the entire mankind. Understanding of the Qur'an can happen by reading the text and translation, seeking its meaning, identifying the message of a chapter and listening to scholarly lectures on Qur'an.

6. Contemplation

There are several verses that censure those who do not contemplate over Qur'an. "(This is) a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, (O Muhammad), that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded" (Qur'an 38:29). Thus, one should

move forward and engage oneself in pondering and researching to get in-depth understanding of the Qur'an.

7. Teaching

Allah mentioned four tasks entrusted to the Prophet. Among them, the third is to teach them Qur'an. "It is He who has sent among the unlettered (Arabs) a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book (i.e., the Qur'an) and wisdom (i.e., the sunnah) – although they were before in clear error" (Qur'an 62:2). The Prophet said, "The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it" (Bukhari). The hadith makes it clear that if one wants to be the best then he should teach Qur'an to others.

8. Application

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And this (Qur'an) is a Book We have revealed (which is) blessed, so follow it and fear Allah that you may receive mercy" (Qur'an 6:155). The Qur'an was sent down so that the people can follow it and practically apply it. The application of the Qur'an basically happens at two levels, that of the individual and of the society.

The application of the Qur'an can be understood by observing how the companions of the Prophet applied it. Their approach combined memorisation and application. Abu Abdir Rahman As-Sulami said, "We were informed by those who used to teach us the Qur'an, (Uthman ibn Affan, Ibn Masud and others) that they would learn ten verses at a time from the Prophet and they would not go beyond them, until they had learnt the knowledge and application within them. They said, "So we learned the Qur'an, along with its knowledge and application at the same time". Some memorised the Qur'an from cover to cover, but all of them put its teachings in practice. They understood the Qur'an and applied it as well.

The application of the Qur'an at the state level, was done by the Prophet, in Madina. He established a state on the principles of Qur'an. He implemented Qur'an as a way of life. The political system, economy, social life, education were all based on principles presented by the Qur'an.

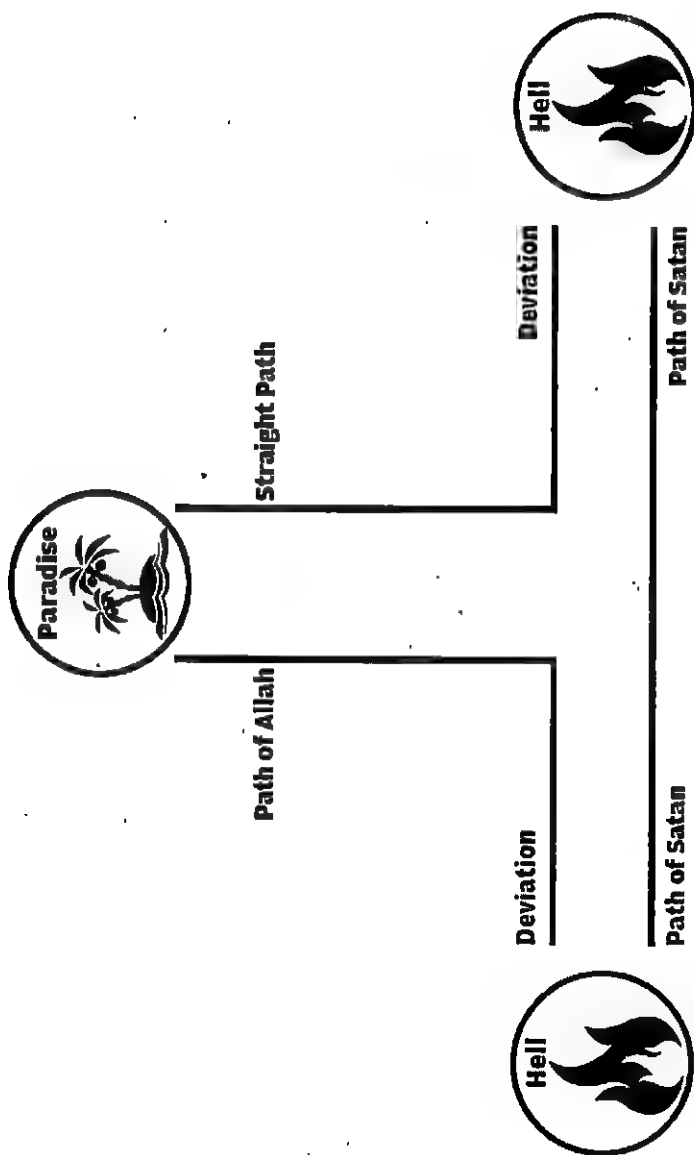
Conclusion

What is required of believers is progress from one level to another. The Prophet said, "He whose two days are equal, is a loser" (Daiylami). One should not only believe in the book of Allah but should also strive to implement it. One should pray that the book of Allah becomes the basis of the law of the land. With sincere effort, people would move forward. Getting closer to the Qur'an, is a sign of love for Allah and His Prophet. The closer a person is with the Qur'an, the nearer he would be to success.

III

Ethics in Practice

Significance of Moderation



Introduction

Jabir reported, "We were sitting with the Prophet (pbuh) when he drew a line with his hand on the ground, like this in front of him. He then drew two lines to the right and two lines to the left and said, "These are the paths of Satan". He then placed his hand on the centre line and recited this verse, "And, (moreover), this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow (other) ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous" (Ahmad). The verse is from 6:153.

The hadith basically offers us a concept of straight path, approved by Allah. Every day in Salah, we recite Surah Al-Fatiha and we pray to Allah to guide us to the straight path. The balanced approach of Islam is one of its most manifest characteristics. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And thus have We made of you a nation justly balanced, that you may be witnesses over the people and the Messenger a witness over yourselves..." (Qur'an 2:143). Therefore, one can find moderation in every aspect of life, guided by principles of Islam.

Prophet said, "Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately. Always adopt a middle, moderate, regular course, whereby you will reach your target (of paradise)" (Bukhari). "The good deeds of any person will not make him enter Paradise (i.e., no one enters paradise only through his good deeds)". The Prophet's companions asked, "Not even you?" The Prophet replied, "Not even myself, unless God bestows His favour and mercy on me. So be moderate in your religious deeds and do what is within your ability. None of you should wish for death, for if he is a doer of good, he may increase his good deeds, and if he is an evil doer, he may repent to Allah" (Bukhari). The above narration show us that Islam has promoted and encouraged people to be moderate by adopting the straight path.

Straight path is always the path of Islam and deviation from it is the path of Satan.

Examples

The following examples show us how Islam describes the middle path:

1. Following Religion

Prophet said, "Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion, will not be able to continue (long) in that way. So, you should not go to extremes, but try to achieve perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by worshipping in the morning and in the nights" (Bukhari). The hadith advises people not to adopt extremism in following religion but one should strive to attain perfection in every act he does.

2. Imparting Knowledge

Shaqiq said, "We were sitting at the door of Abdullah ibn Masud awaiting his arrival. (While waiting for him), Yazid ibn Muawiyah an-Nakhai passed by us, so we said to him; inform him (Abdullah ibn Masud) that we are waiting for him. Yazid then went inside and Abdullah came out to us soon thereafter. He addressed us (saying), "I have been informed that you were waiting for me. The one reason I did not come out earlier, was that I did not want you to be bored or become weary. Prophet (pbuh) used to take our disposition in due consideration (and inquire about our circumstances); when teaching us. He was apprehensive that we do not become tired or bored" (Bukhari and Muslim). Abdullah ibn Masud used to deliver sermons every Thursday. A person said to him, "O Abu Abdur Rahman (this was his title), we like listening to you and we look forward to it. We would like you to advise us every day". He replied, "The only thing that is preventing me from doing so is that I would not like you to become bored

and weary. I take you and your circumstances into consideration when advising you; just as Prophet used to do, out of fear that we do not become tired or bored" (Bukhari and Muslim).

Prophet used to take into consideration the times and circumstances of his companions when advising and teaching them so that they should not get bored. In doing this, he used to follow a moderate and reasonable method. This was due to his kindness. When companions learned from him, they would do so energetically with interest and enthusiasm; not be restless or bored; as that would defeat the purpose.

3. Acts of Worship

Some people go to extremes. One category of people, in order to become spiritual, leave everything and go to the jungle to worship God and get closer to him. Another category of people keep miles away from spirituality and even if they are spiritual, it is just for the sake of formality. These people are fully engrossed in worldly pleasures and enjoyments.

Such extremes are to be avoided.

Once a group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet, asking how the Prophet worshipped. When they were informed about Prophet's routine, they considered it insufficient and said, "Where are we in comparison with the Prophet, as his past and future sins have been forgiven". Then one of them said, "I will offer prayer, throughout the night forever". The other announced, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast". The third said, "I will keep away from women and will not marry". Allah's Messenger (on learning about the episode) came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and also break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women, so he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me" (Bukhari

and Muslim). From this hadith, we learn that Prophet adopted the middle path in worship.

4. Charity

Charity is a very noble act in Islam. Islam encourages people to give charity. But here also, Islam instructs people to adopt the middle course. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And they ask you what they should spend. Say, "The excess (beyond needs)." Thus, Allah makes clear to you the verses (of revelation) that you might give thought" (Qur'an 2:219). The verse says that surplus money (after spending on himself and his family) should be given away in charity.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And do not make your hand (as) chained to your neck or extend it completely and (thereby) become blamed and insolvent" (Qur'an 17:29). The verse commands people not to give away so much that they end up having no money at all; which would incapacitate them. Thus, Islam guides people to be moderate in charity.

5. Managing Money

Generally, we find two types of people in the world. The first category is of those who spend money extravagantly; without sense or purpose. Such irresponsible spending is not proper. Allah says in the Qur'an, "...And do not be extravagant; indeed, Allah does not like those who are extravagant" (Qur'an 6:141).

On the other hand, we find another category of people who are misers, who think a hundred times before spending, even when necessary. They are so miserly that they neither spend money on others nor on themselves, they only believe in saving money. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And do not make your hand (as) chained to your neck ..." (Qur'an 17:29). Prophet said, "Every day two angels come down from Heaven and one of them says, 'O Allah! Compensate every person who spends in Your Cause,' and the other (angel) says, 'O Allah! Destroy every miser'

(Bukhari). Prophet once said, "There are two habits which are never present together in a believer, miserliness and bad manners" (Tirmidhi). Prophet has also said, "Avoid doing injustice to others, for on the Day of Judgment, it will turn into manifold darkness, and safeguard yourself against miserliness, for it ruined those who were before you. It incited them to killing and treating the unlawful as lawful" (Muslim).

Allah says, "And (believers are) those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or miserly but are ever, between that, (justly) moderate" (Qur'an 25:67). Islam neither wants people to be misers, nor spendthrifts. It is not proper to spend money on useless things. It is also not proper to become a miser, who does not spend money even on basic and important things. Thus, Islam advocates a middle course.

6. Role and Status of Women

We observe two extremes in the way women are treated. On one end, women are not given due rights, nor their share in property. They are not given the choice to select the spouse. Widows are not allowed to remarry or beautify themselves. They are not allowed to join religious ceremonies as they are considered inauspicious. Sometimes they are not allowed to live if the husband expires. On the other hand, the west is inclined to treat women as society butterfly by portraying her as an object of lust, putting her on public display and exploiting her, in the name of feminism. They use her as advertisement to sell products, force her into prostitution and exploit her body. Both these extremes are nothing but the path of Satan.

Islam adopts just approach, avoiding extremes. Islam gives rights as well as respect to women. It gives her right to live, due right in property, right to get educated, choice to select her spouse, right to remarry (if divorced or widowed). She may own property and manage it. Islam helps her live a dignified life. On the other hand, Islam

advises women to dress modestly so that she earns respect in society.

7. Emotions

Prophet Muhammed said, "Love your friend moderately; perhaps he becomes worthy of hate to you someday and hate whom you will, moderately, Perhaps he becomes your friend someday" (Tirmidhi). Situations and circumstances keep on changing in a person's life. As a result, old friends become new adversaries and vice versa, and nobody knows what is in store, in the future. It is, therefore, advisable not to go beyond the limits of moderation, in display of friendship or enmity.

This hadith advises us to be moderate in our dealings and not go overboard. Even if one dislikes someone, the dislike need not be extreme, for it might be a cause of embarrassment in future; if one's opinion is changed. Similarly, one should be moderate in affection. A believer loves Allah and hates what He hates. This is the Muslim's criteria of love and hatred.

8. Relationship with Opposite Sex

Currently in the world, we find two extremes. One set of people desire illegitimate relationship with multiple women to satisfy their sexual desires. On the other side, there are others, who would avoid women and marriage altogether; to be nearer to God and achieve spiritual progress.

Islam adopts a middle path by encouraging people to get married, in order to satisfy their sexual desires in a legitimate manner. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves ..." (Qur'an 24:32). Prophet said, "Marriage is my Sunnah, whoever disregards my path is not from among us" (Ibn Majah). "Whoever is able to marry, should marry" (Bukhari). "When a man

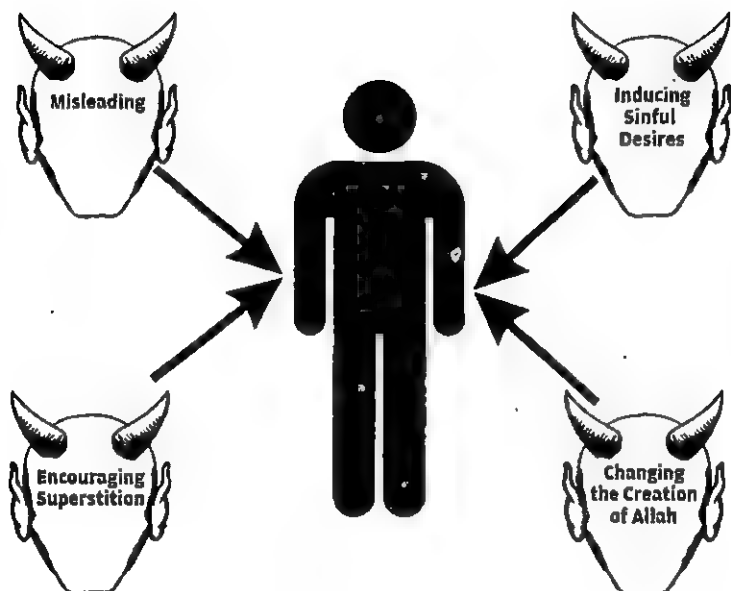
marries, he indeed perfects half of his religion. Then he should fear Allah for the remaining half" (Bukhari).

Great injury is done when one adopts any of the above-mentioned extremes. When one has illegitimate relationship with many women, he is involved in immorality and sin and might be exposed to various kinds of diseases. On the other hand, when one does not marry to be spiritual; one will be fighting natural human urges and would ultimately lose the fight. Then one would be tempted towards various immoral and immodest ways (outside marriage) to fulfil his sexual desires. To avoid such misconduct, Islam strongly encourages people to get married.

Conclusion

These are a few examples to show that Islam prescribes a moderate path in every aspect of life. Islam teaches moderation and adopts the straight path in all matters, to create equilibrium; so that one is at peace with one's self and other creations of Allah. Verily, everything has two ends and a middle. If one merely holds either of the ends, the other will be skewed. If one grasps the middle, the two ends will be balanced. One must seek the middle ground in all things. Every praiseworthy characteristic pushed to extremes, would lose its utility. Courage is the middle, between cowardice and recklessness. Human beings have been advised to avoid blameworthy traits, and adopt the right path.

Satan's Activity



Introduction

Generally, there are two types of enemies. The first type is of hidden enemies who attack from behind and it is very difficult to escape them. The second type of enemies attack from the front, in our full knowledge. Any individual will be able to prepare himself much better if he knows his enemies in advance. Thus, Allah states in the Qur'an, "Indeed, he (Satan) is to you a clear enemy" (Qur'an 2:168 and 2:208). Thus, Allah introduces Satan as our 'Open Enemy'. So, we human beings should be aware of him and his aims, objectives and tactics.

When Satan was ordered by Allah to go out of paradise, he said that he would deviate people from the right path using four methods. Allah quotes Satan's intention, "And I will mislead them, and I will arouse in them (sinful) desires, and I will command them so they will slit the ears of cattle, and I will command them so they will change the creation of Allah. And whoever takes Satan as an ally instead of Allah has certainly sustained a clear loss" (Qur'an 4:119).

Methods

The following are the different methods adopted by Satan:

1. Misleading

Satan misleads people to deviate them from the straight path. Satan will make people disobedient to Allah. Man will do things which are against his own nature and would associate partners with Allah. Satan would make people forget their responsibility and position as vicegerents of Allah.

Satan would depict the world as desirable and alluring to man. Man would be engrossed in seeking worldly pleasures and ultimately forget Allah and the day of judgement. When this state is achieved, then deviating man to do other misdeeds would be much easier.

2. Inducing Sinful Desires

Man is a bundle of desires. Satan promotes certain sinful desires among people which they struggle to satisfy. They desire illegitimate sexual pleasure, fame, luxuries and popularity. Thus, one should be very careful and avoid succumbing to sinful desire induced by Satan.

3. Encouraging Superstition

"Slitting the Ears of Cattle" refers to an act of Superstition. This was customary among Arabs to slit ears

of a she camel after she had given birth to five or ten off springs. Then they let her go in the name of their diety; they considered it forbidden to put her to any work. Likewise, the male camel that had become father of ten camels, was consecrated to some deity. The slitting of ears, symbolized this consecration.

Today, people have developed a lot of superstitious belief in every aspect of their lives. In our country, widows were considered unlucky, so in the past they were burnt alive along with husband, on his death. A particular time of the day is taken as inauspicious while sighting a peacock before a journey is considered auspicious. A black cat crossing one's way is considered a sign of bad luck. The window of the kitchen is supposed to face the east. Entrance of the house is supposed to be in a particular direction. Adding one odd rupee to a gift sum is considered auspicious. Thus, Satan has instigated people to entertain a wide variety of superstitions.

4. Changing the Creation of Allah

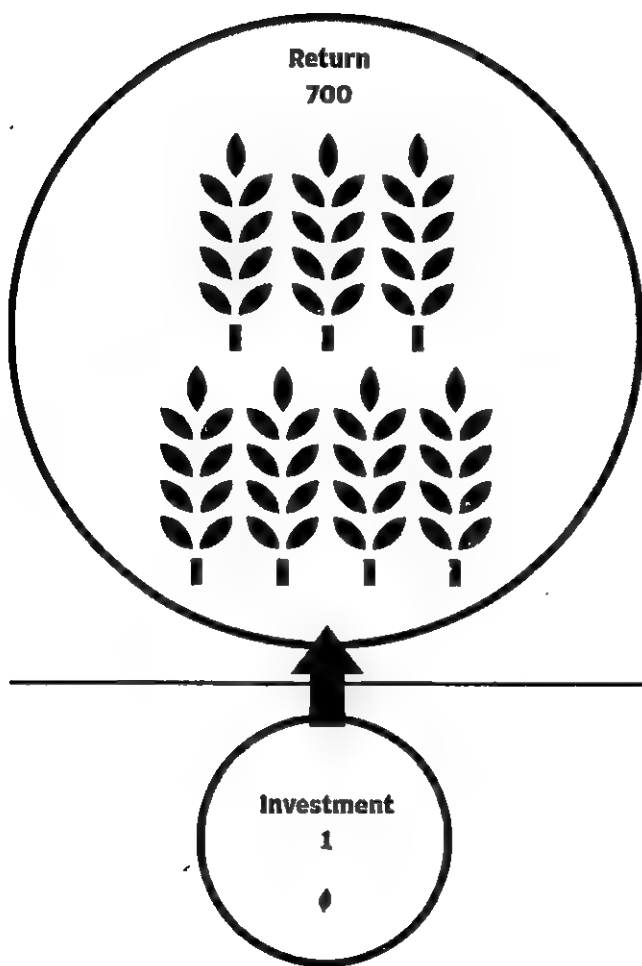
Human civilization evolved through innovative use of the resources given by Allah. The improper alteration of Allah's creation, which is characterized as Satanic, consists in using a thing not for the purpose of which it was created by Allah.

In other words, all acts performed in violation of man's true nature are the result of misleading prompted by Satan. These include, for instance, sodomy, celibacy, sterilization of either men or women, turning males into eunuchs or diverting females from functions entrusted to them by nature. These and numerous similar measures are enacted by Satan's disciples in this world; by their actions, Satan's followers say that the law of Creation was faulty and that they would like to change it.

Conclusion

Satan's threat was, "Then I will come to them (i.e. human beings); from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You (Allah) will not find most of them grateful (to You)." (Qur'an 7:17). Prophet once said, "Satan circulates in human being as blood circulates in the body" (Bukhari). From this we learn that Satan will adopt all means and modes to distract and deviate man from the true path. We can protect ourselves from the plot of Satan by getting closer to Allah and seeking His protection. We need to always remember that Satan is our open enemy, who is working round the clock with the sole objective of misleading us.

Metaphor of Grains and Spikes



(Quran 2:261)

Introduction

The reward of Allah is immeasurable. Allah has instructed us to perform good deeds. Worship of Allah alone is the supreme good deed, as is kindness towards others. These acts are easy to perform and will be generously rewarded. These deeds might seem small to people but they can become vast as mountains in their weightage, on the day of judgement.

Metaphor

Allah says in the Qur'an, "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed (of grain) which grows seven spikes; in each spike are a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies (His reward) for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing" (Qur'an 2:261).

The verse is an example of how a deed of charity brings vast return. As from one grain, seven ears are grown and every ear has a hundred grains; similarly, every good deed will be rewarded seven hundred times. Allah will not only reward one for the quantity or amount spent in His cause but He would also reward one for sincere intention with which one spent in charity, inspite of hard circumstances. Charity given whole-heartedly, with deep, faithful conviction and in difficult circumstances will deserve more reward than the money spent in good circumstances.

It is not difficult at all for Allah, who causes a grain to give rise to seven hundred grains; to let one's charity grow in a likely manner. A single unit of money one spends, will be returned seven hundred-fold. This statement is followed by a mention of two of Allah's attributes. First is His generosity, His Hand is not clenched so as to restrain Him from recompensing man for his good deeds to the fullest extent. Secondly, Allah is All-Knowing, which means that Allah is not unaware of what one spends and the spirit in

which one spends. There is no reason to fear that one will not receive one's due reward.

Abu Huraira reported, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "None gives charity from what is good, (for Allah only accepts what is good), but that the Merciful takes it with His right hand. Even if it is a single date, it is nurtured in the hand of the Merciful until it becomes greater than a mountain, just as one of you nurtures his young horse or camel" (Muslim).

In another narration, Ibn Abbas reported, the Messenger of Allah said, "Verily, Allah has specified good and bad deeds and He made them clear. Whoever intends to perform a good deed but does not actually do it, then Allah will record it as a (single) complete good deed. If he intends to do it and actually does so, then Allah the Exalted, will record it as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times as much or even more. If he intends to do a bad deed and does not actually do it, then Allah will record this conduct as a good deed. If he does the bad deed, Allah will record for him a single bad deed" (Bukhari).

Abu Masud reported, a man came to the Prophet, with a bridled camel and he said, "This is for the cause of Allah". The Messenger of Allah said, "You will have for it seven hundred camels on the Day of Resurrection. Each of them will be bridled" (Muslim). In another narration, Prophet said, "Every deed of the son of Adam is multiplied from ten to seven hundred times. Allah the Exalted says, except for fasting, for it is done for my sake and I will reward it" (Muslim).

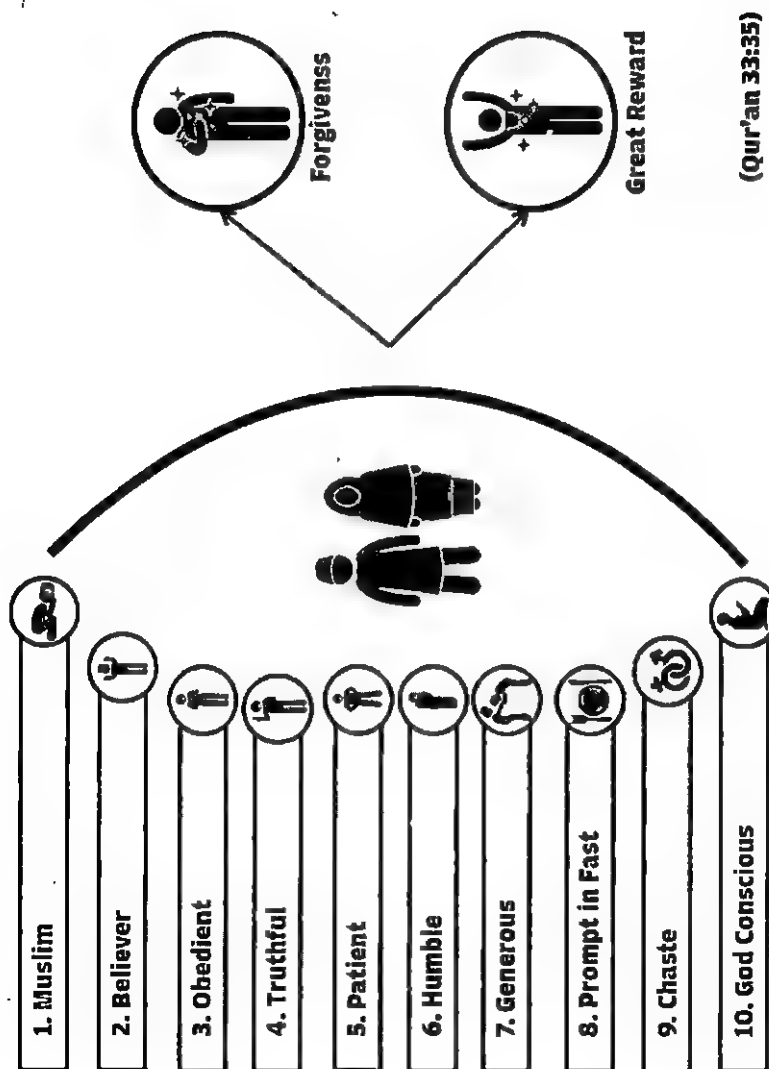
Conclusion

One should pray for Allah's reward for his good deeds but should also keep a strong check on his sins, as they might become a big liability on the day of judgement. Abu Huraira reported, The Messenger of Allah said, "Do you know who is bankrupt?" They said, "The one without money or goods is bankrupt." The Prophet said, "Verily,

the bankrupt of my nation are those who would bring with them, on the Day of Resurrection, good deeds as, prayers, fasting, and charity; but also bad deeds such as insults, slander, consuming wealth of others, shedding blood, and beating others. The oppressed will each be given from his good deeds. If his good deeds run out before justice is done, then their sins will be cast upon him and he will be thrown into Hellfire" (Muslim). Thus, one must strive to perform good deeds regularly and be careful, not to ruin them with his sins.

The Qur'an mentions two significant attributes of Allah. He is entirely merciful and especially merciful. So, the return with Allah is immense. No business in the world would give us return of seven hundred times the investment. We should seek Allah's mercy by giving charity in the way of Allah. The amount spent might seem small, but its return would be unimaginable. Wealth spent in the way of Allah is a great investment, it would bring high returns on the day of judgement.

Forgiveness



Introduction

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, obedient men and obedient women, truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the generous men and generous women, fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and women who do so, and men who remember Allah often and the women who do so, for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward" (Qur'an 33:35). The uniqueness of the verse is that it explicitly mentions women and men both. The verse specifies ten criteria which make an individual eligible for forgiveness and great reward from Allah.

Criteria

The following are the required attributes to deserve Forgiveness and Great Reward:

1. Muslim

To deserve forgiveness and great reward, one should be a Muslim. Muslims are people who have surrendered themselves to Allah. They have accepted Islam as code of life and have decided to follow it in their lives. They adopt the attitude of obedience and submission to Allah.

2. Believer

To be blessed with forgiveness and great reward, one should be a Believer. Believers sincerely regard the guidance given by Islam, as truth. They are convinced that the path shown by Qur'an and the Prophet is the only right and straight way. And in following it alone lies their true success. That which has been declared as wrong by Allah and His Prophet (pbuh) is certainly wrong. And that which has been declared as right by Allah and His Prophet is certainly right.

They do not disregard any injunction given by Qur'an and Sunnah. They do not seek to change it to suit their desires or mould it according to current trends. The Prophet has described the true state of faith in these words, "He who reconciled himself to Allah as his Lord and to Islam as his way of Life and to Muhammad as the Messenger, has the true taste of faith" (Muslim).

3. Obedient

Another condition to deserve forgiveness and great reward is to be obedient. Obedient are people not content with mere belief but practically implement Divine injunctions. They are not among those who claim to believe in Allah and His Messenger but violate Islamic code in practice. What Allah and his Messenger have forbidden is bad; sincere believer would avoid it in practical life.

4. Truthful

An important criterion for forgiveness and great reward is being Truthful. Truthful are people who stick to truth in their speech and are honest in their dealings. They do not indulge in falsehood, deception, fraud or forgery. They utter with their tongues only what they believe to be true. They practice and perform only what they honestly find to be in accordance with righteousness and truth.

5. Patient

A crucial criterion to deserve forgiveness and great reward is Patience. Patience implies strength of character to face obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses encountered while following the right path. Allah and His Messenger encouraged believers to establish Allah's religion in the world; no fear, temptation or desire should deviate them from this mission.

6. Humble

A basic criterion for forgiveness and great reward is humility. Humble person is free from pride, egoism and arrogance. Those who are humble, realize that they are servants of God. Their hearts as well as their bodies bow before Allah, inspired by piety.

7. Generous

The criterion for forgiveness and great reward is generosity. Charity implies spending one's wealth in the way of Allah. Believers are not at all niggardly in the matter of helping the servants of Allah. They would not deprive them of their support. They would help a sick or afflicted person, the weak or disabled, the poor or needy or orphan. They would spend to promote the cause of Allah's religion, they are never miserly in spending their wealth for that purpose.

8. Prompt in Fasting

A criterion for forgiveness and great reward is to fast. Besides obligatory fast in the month of Ramadan, believers give due importance to voluntary fasts. Prophet Muhammad would fast on each Monday and Thursday and also on 13th, 14th and 15th day of every month. Voluntary fast is recommended for six days in the month of Shawwal (the month following Ramadan), on the Day of Arafah (9th of Dhu'l Hijja), and the Day of Ashura (10th of Muharram).

9. Chaste

To deserve forgiveness and great reward, one should guard private parts. Guarding private parts means avoiding adultery and nudity. Nudity does not only merely mean being naked. It is also nudity to put on scanty dress which shows the body or is so tight fitting that it reveals outlines of the body.

10. God Conscious

A basic criterion for forgiveness and great reward is to remember Allah. Remembering Allah means that a believer mentions Allah's name, in one way or the other, at all times in every business of life. Man cannot develop such a state of the mind unless God Consciousness becomes deeply embedded in his heart. When conviction in conscious mind has percolated to subconscious and unconscious mind, then only he will remember and mention Allah's name on every occasion. He will begin with Bismillah when he eats and say Alhamdulillah when he finishes. He will remember Allah when he goes to bed and mention Allah's name when he gets up. In his conversation also, he will again and again pronounce Bismillah, Alhamdulillah, InshaAllah and MashaAllah. He would ask for Allah's help in every matter and thank Him for every blessing. He will seek His mercy in every affliction and turn to Him in every trouble. He will fear Him and keep away from evil and ask for His forgiveness when he happens to commit an error. He will pray to Him for fulfilment of every need. In every state and in every business of life, his habit would be to remember Allah.

For all other acts of worship, there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one has fulfilled the obligation, when one has performed them. But God Consciousness is not for a special time. A believer remembers Allah to maintain his link with Allah permanently. The other religious acts become meaningful only when the heart of the worshippers is inclined to Allah; while the tongue is uttering Allah's name. When the heart is in such a state; religious acts indeed lead to spiritual growth.

Muadh ibn Anas Juhani relates that a person asked the Prophet of Allah, "Who among those, who fight in the way of Allah, will get the highest reward?", the Prophet replied, "The one, who remembers Allah the most". The man then asked, "Who among the observers of the fast, will get the

highest reward?", the Prophet replied, "The one who remembers Allah the most". The man then asked the same question about Prayer, Zakah, charity, Hajj. The Prophet in every case, gave the same answer, "He (gets the highest reward) who remembers Allah the most" (Ahmad). This shows us the importance of constantly remembering Allah in every aspect of our lives.

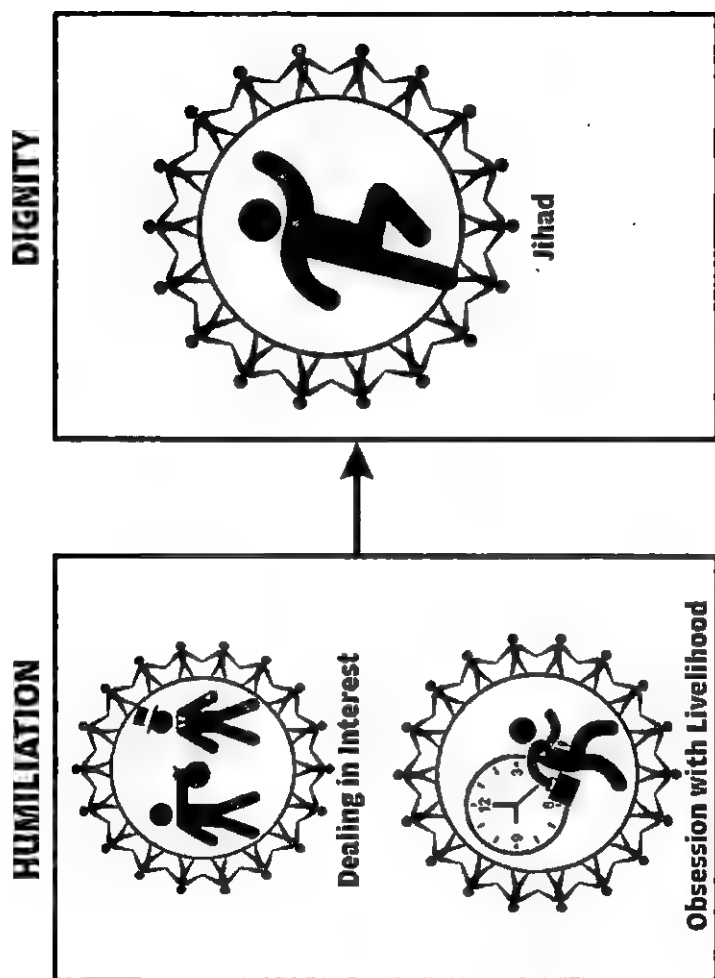
Result – Forgiveness and Great Reward

For one who possesses these ten qualities, Allah has promised him two bounties. One is Forgiveness. Forgiveness refers to condoning all sins committed by man. The second blessing is a Great Reward. Great Reward refers to Paradise, which would be an everlasting blessing, which man could never visualize.

Conclusion

Qur'an has informed us of qualities and characteristics which are of real worth in the scale of Allah. These are basic values of Islam presented in one sentence. In regard to these, there is no difference between man and woman. The two may have separate spheres of activity. But if they possess these qualities and characteristics, Allah (irrespective of gender) would raise them to high ranks and bless them with great reward. It will in no way affect their rank and reward that one carried out household responsibilities; while the other performed the duties of caliphate implementing the Shariah. Women raised children in the house while men went to the battlefield and fought for the sake of Allah and His religion. Neither would be deprived of reward, they deserve.

Worldliness and Jihad



Introduction

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "If you deal in interest and hang on tails of cows (getting completely involved in agriculture and business), being satisfied with cultivation and ceasing

to take part in Jihad, Allah will inflict a humiliation upon you which will not be removed until you return to your religion" (Ahmad and Abu Dawood). The hadith lists two activities which lead to humiliation, if Muslim community is obsessed with them. The activities which lead to humiliation are indulgence in interest and obsession with livelihood. An activity which saves them from such humiliation is striving in the way of Allah. The explanation follows.

Activities

The following traits lead to Humiliation:

1. Dealing in Interest

Dealing with interest includes taking it, paying it, becoming a witness to it or writing a contract involving it. All such acts are prohibited, as being aspects of interest. Interest is an act which is strongly condemned in the Qur'an. Allah says, "O you who have believed, do not consume interest, doubled and multiplied, but fear Allah that you may be successful" (Qur'an 3:130). The verse tells us not to consume interest and also promises success to people who fear Allah and do not indulge in interest. There are other verses also in the Qur'an which strongly condemn interest such as 2:275, 2: 278-279, 4:161 and 30:39.

When a person deals in interest, he becomes obsessed with wealth. He tends to think excessively about money. A person engrossed in money, tends to get more and more involved with worldly affairs. He drifts away from Allah and religion. He forgets and ignores his purpose in life and only thinks about money. He plans to earn more and more. Thus, when interest becomes common then Allah would condemn that community to suffer humiliation.

2. Obsession with Livelihood

"Hanging on tails of cows" implies getting completely involved in business activities which occupy them to such

an extent that they forget their main responsibility. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And (Allah also forgave) the three who were left behind (in Jihad and regretted their error). Matters reached a point that the earth closed in on them, in spite of its vastness and their souls confined them. And they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them, so that they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the one who accepts repentance. He is the Merciful" (Qur'an 9:118). The verse speaks about three companions of the Prophet, who did not participate in the battle of Tabuk. They remained engrossed in their business activities and business commitments, because of which they abstained from taking part in Jihad. Then the Prophet announced their social boycott for fifty days. Doing business is not wrong, but when one indulges in it to the extent that one neglects his duty of Jihad, then that is not acceptable.

Once, Prophet said, "If son of Adam were to own a valley full of gold, he would desire to have two. Nothing can fill his mouth except the earth (of the grave); Allah turns with mercy to him who turns to Him in repentance" (Bukhari and Muslim). Prophet also said, "Every Ummah (people) has a test to undergo; my Ummah will be tried through wealth" (Tirmidhi). Obsession with earning means that the person has become materialistic and would be inclined to worldly pleasures than to Allah and religion. When one is solely occupied in earning money, he would not spend time in the way of Allah.

Remedy

The following activity saves the community from humiliation:

1. Jihad (Struggle)

Jihad is a very significant aspect of Islam. The basic meaning of Jihad is to struggle. When mentioned in the Qur'an, it refers to struggling and striving in the way of

Allah. Allah says, "O you who have believed, fear Allah and seek the means (of nearness) to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed" (Qur'an 5:35). The verse states that believers need to strive in Allah's cause. Jihad would contribute to their success; they would escape humiliation. Allah says, "And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him ..." (Qur'an 22:78). The verse states that one needs to strive in the way of Allah; to one's utmost.

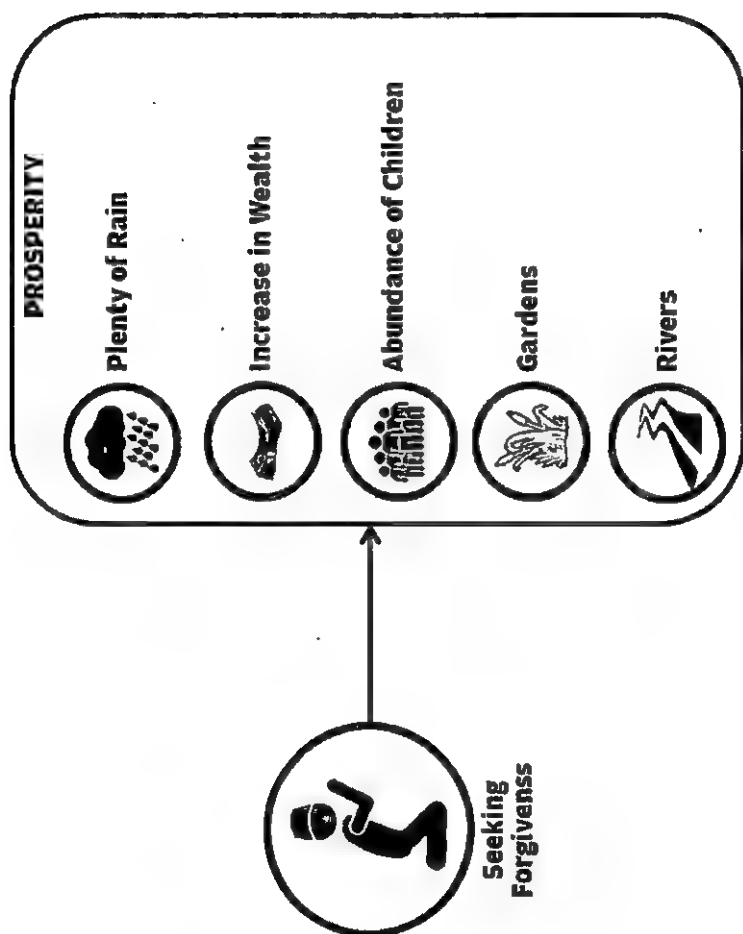
Message of Islam is to abolish lordship of man over man and bring him under the rule of Allah. To stake everything we have, including our lives, to achieve this purpose is called Jihad. Acts of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and hajj, all make us eligible for Jihad. People obsessed with worldly affairs would neglect Jihad. Allah would visit humiliation on them.

Conclusion

The Prophet said, "By He in whose hand is my soul, you will enjoin good, forbid evil and encourage each other to do good or else, Allah will surround you all with torment, or make the wicked among you your leaders. The righteous among you will then supplicate, but their supplication will not be accepted" (Tirmidhi). The hadith clearly states then when people do not struggle in enjoining good and forbidding evil, then Allah would put them in torment.

If Muslims stop struggling and striving collectively in the way of Allah, being engrossed in interest and if they are obsessed with business activities, they would have to suffer humiliation. The only way to avoid it is to return to Allah by struggling and striving in His cause. Allah informs us of the causes of humiliation and also gives the solution, to be adopted to overcome humiliation.

Seeking Forgiveness to deserve Prosperity



Introduction

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And (Prophet Nuh) said (to his people), Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. He will send (rain from) the sky upon you in (continuing) showers. And give you increase in

wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers" (Qur'an 71:10-12). The verses identify the link of forgiveness and prosperity. When people seek forgiveness then Allah would provide them significant bounties; continuous rain, increase in wealth, increase in sons, provisions of gardens and flowing rivers.

Seeking Forgiveness

Allah has granted intellect to human beings. Intellect entails responsibility. The more gifted a person is, more he is responsible. Little children are not held responsible, because their intellect has not yet developed. The insane are not responsible, because they have lost the intellectual capacity. Human beings tend to make mistakes. Sometimes we make mistakes without deliberation and intention, but sometime we knowingly and deliberately sin and do wrong to others. As human beings, we are constantly in need of forgiveness. Thus, Islam teaches people to always seek forgiveness from Allah.

Allah says in the Qur'an "And whoever does a wrong or wrongs himself but then seeks forgiveness of Allah, will find Allah Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an 4:110). The verse states that, an individual who after committing wrong seeks forgiveness from Allah, would be forgiven. One of the names of Allah is Al-Ghaffar (The Great Forgiver), the One who forgives the sins of His slaves, time and again. Seeking forgiveness would become a gateway of relief and happiness. It removes anxiety, opens the door of blessings and mercy.

As reported by Al-Agharr Al-Muzani, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "Sometimes I perceive a veil over my heart, and I supplicate Allah for forgiveness a hundred times a day" (Muslim). Abu Hurairah reports, I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, "I swear by Allah that I seek Allah's Pardon and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day" (Bukhari). We learn that even the

Prophet asked Allah for forgiveness, not less than seventy times a day.

Prosperity

Allah is kind and merciful. When his slaves ask for forgiveness, he not only forgives them but also provides them with bounties in the world and in hereafter. The bounties in the world would be in the form of plenty of rain, increase in wealth and sons. The bounties in the hereafter would be provisions of the garden and the flowing rivers.

The following aspects of Prosperity are consequences of Seeking Forgiveness, from Allah:

1. Plenty of Rain

Good rain would help people to get good yield and ultimately help them get enough food to eat and water to drink.

2. Increase in Wealth

More wealth would help them lead comfortable, happy and satisfied life. It would enable them to help others as well.

3. Abundance of Children

It would give them happiness and support during old age.

4. Gardens

Gardens are pleasing and one can eat different kinds of fruits, view green landscape and have eternal happiness.

5. Rivers

From rivers in paradise, believers would drink water, milk and honey and enjoy themselves.

Once during a famine, Umar came out to invoke Allah for rain and begged only forgiveness of Him. The people

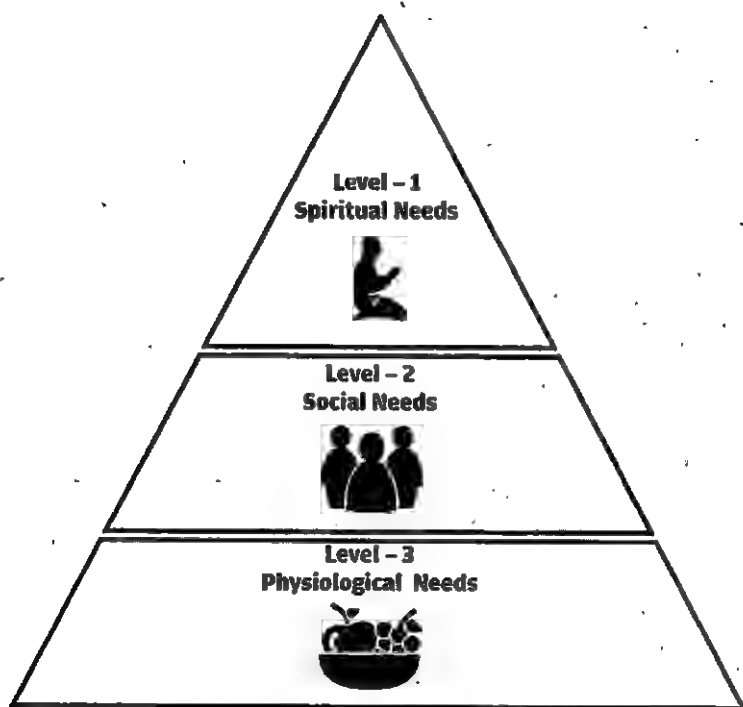
said, "O commander of the faithful, you have not prayed for rain". He replied, "I have knocked at the doors of heaven wherefrom the rain is sent down", and then he recited these verses of Surah Nuh to them. (Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir).

Likewise, when in the assembly of Hasan Basri, a person complained of drought, he said to him "Beg forgiveness of Allah". Another person complained of poverty, a third one said that he was not being blessed with children, a fourth one said that his harvest had failed and Hasan Basri continued to remind everyone to beg forgiveness of Allah. The people asked, "How is it that you have suggested to all the people one and the same cure, for different complaints?". He, in response, recited these verses of Surah Nuh to them (Al-Kashshaf).

Conclusion

Man has been made weak and imperfect, so he tends to commit mistakes and errors. Seeking forgiveness takes a person closer to Allah. Asking forgiveness is a sign that the person considers himself a slave and Allah. It is also a sign that a person is responsible for his mistakes. Allah is so merciful that He not only forgives people when they ask for forgiveness, but also gives them bounties in this world and the hereafter. The three verses provide a simple route to prosperity; that is to seek forgiveness from Allah.

Prophet Ibrahim's Guidance on Human Needs



Introduction

Needs are basic requirements; meeting them is essential for survival. Every human being in the world has needs and he strives to meet them. People have psychological and social needs, among others.

Prophet Ibrahim took his wife and son to the desert. As instructed by Allah, he left them in the desert. He prayed to Allah to provide for them, "Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So, make hearts among the people incline toward them and

provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful" (Qur'an 14:37). The verse gives us a framework to understand priorities among needs.

The following are our needs:

1. Spiritual Needs

After leaving his wife and son, the first aspect mentioned in Ibrahim's supplication is of 'Spiritual Need'. He says "that they may establish Salah". The main focus and need according to Ibrahim is the 'Spiritual Need'. Being spiritual refers to being close to Allah by strongly believing in him and performing Salah.

Salah is the foremost purpose of construction of the House of Allah (Baitullah). Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) had settled his son Ismail there, in order that the generations to come, might continue to establish Salah.

His prayer was that they may be given strength to be punctual in Salah, because Salah symbolises everything good and blissful. This tells us that the greatest concern of believers ought to be punctuality in Salah. Ibrahim left his wife and son in the barren land but instead of praying for food first, he first asked for the strength to establish Salah.

One should be punctual in Salah because Salah leads to everything good and blissful in life. This tells us that there can be no greater concern to be particular and punctual in Salah.

Spiritual need is the requirement of one's soul. Islam is way of life based on spirituality. As the revelation of the Qur'an began, verses and chapters revealed in initial stage focused on oneness of God, Prophethood and the Life after Death. These beliefs help a person strengthen his spirituality. Islam aims at increasing one's spirituality through obligatory acts as well. Generally, people who possess a degree of spirituality, are God fearing, honest, humble, well mannered and just in all their activities.

2. Social Needs

After the supplication for 'Spiritual Need', Ibrahim supplicates for 'Social Need'. He says, "make hearts of people incline toward them".

Social needs refer to interpersonal contacts and human urge seeking belongingness. This need is especially strong in childhood and can be witnessed in children clinging to parents. Human beings seek acceptance among their social groups. Many people due to loneliness, suffer from absence of love and companionship.

Social need is the requirement of one's heart. Ibrahim prayed that his family may not be lonely and hearts of people may be inclined towards them; so that they could have a good social life. People may treat them with love and affection, so that they would also be able to communicate the message of Allah to them.

3. Physiological Needs

After supplicating for Spiritual and Social needs, Ibrahim supplicated for 'Physiological Need'. He says, "provide for them from the fruits". Generally, physiological needs are given first priority, as they are urgent. But Ibrahim placed them in the end of his supplication.

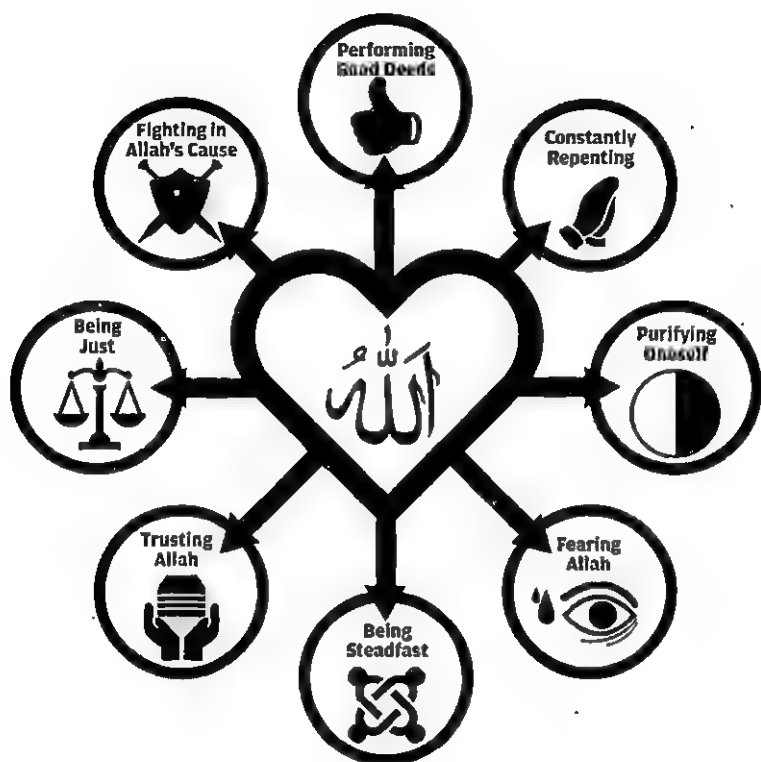
Physiological needs are physical requirements for survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body cannot function properly and life will be at risk. Air, water and food are needed for survival by all animals, as well as human beings. Clothing and shelter provide necessary protection from the elements.

Conclusion

Prophet Ibrahim in his supplication, for fruits to meet physiological needs, also said, "that they might be grateful". The ultimate objective of seeking provisions to satisfy needs, was to ensure that people be grateful to Allah for bounties received. Ibrahim's scheme of priorities was; soul first, then heart and then stomach.

The one who purifies his soul would be successful. Spiritual excellence would help a person abstain from evil. They Qur'an says, "...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing ..." (Qur'an 29:45). One who is spiritually strong will be cautious and will behave properly with people. He would also adopt ethical means to earn money to meet the needs of stomach. Thus, Ibrahim placed spiritual need on top of his priorities.

Love for Allah



Introduction

To gain the pleasure of Allah is the goal of the righteous. Love for Allah is nourishment for heart and soul. The Qur'an presents a set of eight attributes which enable a person to achieve the pleasure of Allah.

If a person cultivates these qualities, then Allah would love him.

1. Good Deeds

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... Allah loves the doers of good" (Qur'an 2:195). Thus, one ought to do good deeds. The Qur'an calls this quality as 'Ihsan'. In ibadah, its meaning has been explained by the Prophet. He said, "You should worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you cannot achieve that degree of perception, then you should, at the least, believe that Allah is seeing you" (Bukhari). When Ihsan relates to social transactions and dealings, the Prophet explains it thus, "You should like for others, what you like for yourselves. And in the same manner, you should dislike for others, what you dislike for yourselves" (Ahmad). Thus, one should always strive to do one's best, in relation to Allah and in relation to people.

2. Constant Repentance

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... Allah loves those who are constantly repentant ..." (Qur'an 2:222). The second activity is to constantly repent to Allah for mistakes committed in the past. The verse speaks about repentance in the context of committing a grave sin like illegitimate sex. Allah says that he would love a person who would repent constantly. When Allah would love a person who repents after committing such a grave sin, then He would love people even more when they seek forgiveness, after committing a smaller sin. Thus, when one repents to Allah, he becomes more God-conscious and goes on to become a better person in life.

3. Purifying Oneself

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... and Allah loves those who purify themselves" (Qur'an 2:222). This includes becoming physically clean by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly the private parts, to perform prayers. Prophet said, "Cleanliness is half of faith" (Muslim). Thus, one who purifies oneself will be loved by Allah.

4. Fearing Allah

Allah says, "... Allah loves those who fear Him" (Qur'an 3:76). Fearing Allah is asset of a believer, benefitting him in this world, easing his affairs, protecting him from Satan and leading him to high rank. Fearing Allah is necessary condition to achieve Faith. It is way of the Prophet. It is characteristic of the righteous and knowledgeable. It helps achieve stability and comfort. It encourages one to seek forgiveness from Allah. It is the way to paradise. It helps achieve tranquillity and safety on the day of judgement. Through fear of Allah, one would stay away from disobedience of Allah and Allah would love him. Thus, fearing Allah would lead to success in this world and the hereafter.

5. Being Steadfast

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... And Allah loves the steadfast" (Qur'an 3:146). The Prophet taught us a supplication in this regard. Shahr ibn Haushab reported, "I asked Umm Salamah, "O Mother of the Believers, which supplication did the Messenger of Allah make frequently when he was in your house?" She said, "He supplicated frequently, "O Controller of hearts, make my heart steadfast on Your religion" (Tirmidhi). Thus, being steadfast is what makes a person consistent in the way of Allah.

6. Trusting Allah

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... Allah loves those who rely (upon Him)" (Qur'an 3:159). The Prophet taught us a dua in this regard. One should always rely upon Allah in each and every matter because Allah alone has control over everything. Trust in Allah reflects the belief of a person, Allah would love a person who would rely upon him, in all matters, small or big.

7. Being Just

Allah says in the Qur'an, "... Allah loves those who act justly" (Qur'an 5:42). It is very important to be just in every aspect of one's life. Prophet said, "Verily, those who were fair, will be in the presence of Allah upon pulpits of light, near the right hand of the Merciful, the Exalted, and both of His sides are right (being equal in honour); those who practiced justice in their rulings and with their families and in all that they did" (Muslim). Thus, when a person is just, he will be loved by Allah and will get a great reward from Allah.

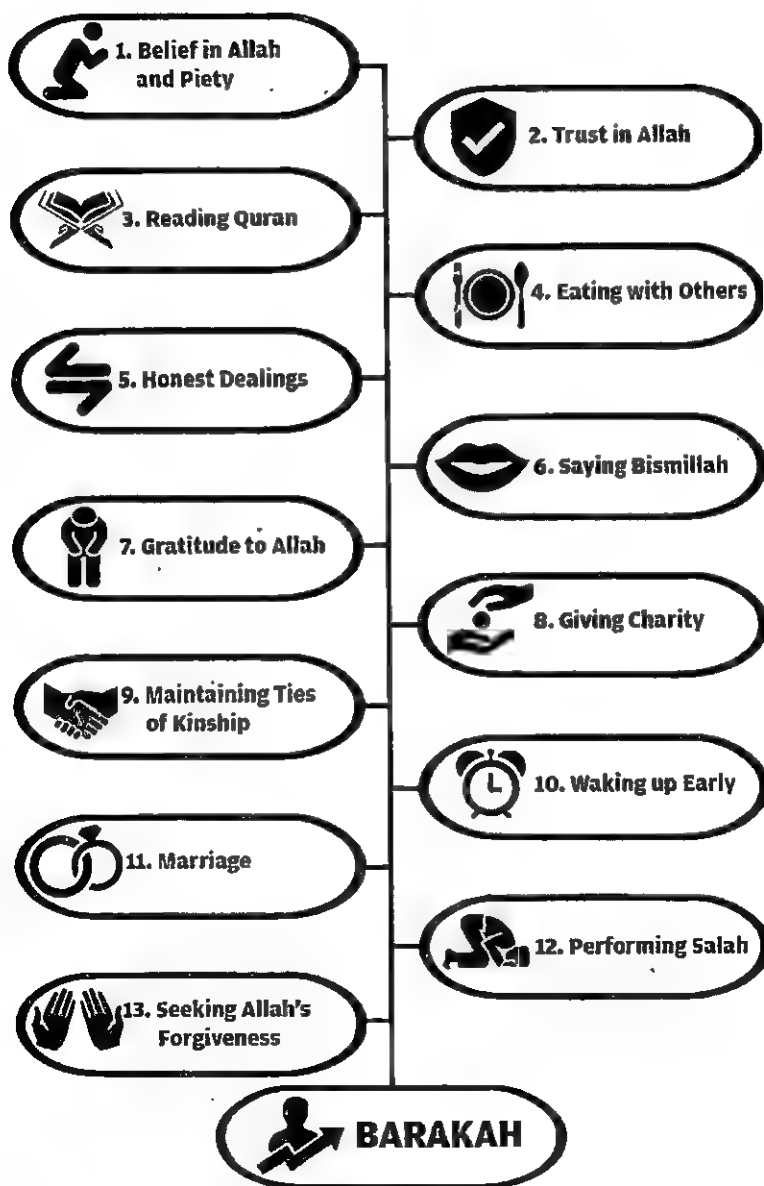
8. Fighting in Allah's Cause

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a (single) structure joined firmly" (Qur'an 61:4). Striving in the cause of Allah is the duty of every Muslim and the way of the Prophets. Thus, Allah would love a person who is following the footsteps of Prophets.

Conclusion

People strive to be good in order to impress others and earn their love. But believers should do good acts solely to please Allah. The Qur'an suggests the above eight actions; Allah would love a person for doing them. What more would one want, other than Allah's love! The love of Allah is the key to Paradise.

Multiple Avenues of Grace (Barakah)



Introduction

Being able to achieve more with limited resources, doing more in limited time, and generating results with small effort, are consequences of Barakah (Blessing or grace of Allah). Barakah can be understood as attachment of Divine grace to an object or action to multiply its utility or fruits. The greatest fruit of Barakah is manifested in the obedience of Allah. Everyone wants to attain Barakah in time, money and resources. Various verses of the Qur'an and sayings of Prophet would help us know the sources through which one can attain Barakah.

Sources

The following are the various sources of Barakah:

1. Belief in Allah and Piety

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And if only the people of the cities had believed and feared Allah, We would have opened upon them blessings from the heavens and the earth; but they denied (the messengers), so We seized them for what they were earning" (Qur'an 7:96). "... And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect ..." (Qur'an 65:2-3). The verses inform us that Allah would open blessings for believers; which would come from heavens and the earth.

2. Trust in Allah

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And Allah will provide for him (the pious person), from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a (decreed) extent" (Qur'an 65:3). Prophet has said, "If only you relied on Allah a true reliance, He would provide sustenance for you just as He does for the birds. They fly out in the morning empty and

return in the afternoon with full stomachs” (Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi and Al-Hakim).

Praying Istikhara Salah, in all important matters and then leaving the outcome to Allah, is also an act of putting the trust in Allah. Prophet would advise that, “If any of you intends to undertake a matter then let him pray two units (two rakah optional nafil) of prayer and supplicate after that. When one puts his trust in Allah, then Allah gives him what is best.

3. Reading Qur'an

Allah says in the Qur'an, “And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what was before it, that you may warn the Mother of Cities and those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they maintain their prayers” (Qur'an 6:92). The Qur'an itself states that it is a book which has been sent down with blessing (Barakah). It is a stream of Barakah and we just need to drink from it. Thus, when one reads the Qur'an, he observes the blessings of Allah, enriching his life.

4. Eating with Others

Prophet said, “Eat together, for blessing is in Jama'at (congregation or being together) ...”, and in another hadeeth, Prophet says, “Whoever has food enough for two persons, should take a third one, and whoever has food enough for four persons, should take a fifth or a sixth.” (Bukhari). From the narration, we can learn that when one eats with people, then there is blessing. The food might be limited but more people can satisfy hunger. If we invite guests to our house, we would experience it. Even a little food would be enough.

5. Honest Dealings

Prophet said, “The buyer and the seller have the option of cancelling or confirming the bargain unless they separate. If they spoke the truth and made clear the defects

of the goods, then they would be blessed in their bargain, and if they told lies and hid some facts, their bargain would be deprived of Allah's blessings" (Bukhari). The hadith makes it clear that in a business transaction, when one speaks the truth, Allah would grant blessing to the transaction. If parties lie, then they would be deprived of the blessing. If one lies and deceives people, one might earn profit, but he will be deprived of blessings in the profit.

6. Saying Bismillah

Prophet said, "If a man remembers Allah as he enters his house and when he takes food, the Satan says, "for me, no place to stay the night and no food". And if the person does not remember Allah as he enters his house, the Satan says, "I have found a place to spend the night". And if he doesn't remember Allah as he takes food, the Satan says, "I have found a place to stay the night and have food" (Muslim and Ahmad). When we say 'Bismillah' before anything we do, we invoke the Name of Allah. Not only will that activity be blessed but Satan cannot touch any part of it.

7. Gratitude to Allah

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you (in favour); but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'" (Qur'an 14:7). The verse is a promise from Allah that gratitude, in response to bounties of Allah, would definitely increase Allah's favours. If a person is not grateful of Allah then, Allah is displeased with him.

8. Giving Charity

In a Hadeeth Qudsi, Prophet (pbuh) said, "Allah has announced, "O son of Adam, spend (in charity), and I'll spend on you" (Bukhari and Muslim). Allah says in the Qur'an, "The example of those who spend their wealth in

the way of Allah is like a seed (of grain) which grows seven spikes; in each spike are a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies (His reward) for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing" (Qur'an 2:261). Giving charity is an act of investment with Allah. Thus, when one gives charity then Allah provides him more. Whenever one feels that Barakah has gone out of life, the quickest way to regain Barakah, is by charity.

9. Maintaining Ties of Kinship

The Prophet said, "Allah created His creation, and when He had finished it, the womb got up and beseeched Allah. Allah asked, "What is your concern?" On that, the womb said, "I seek refuge with you from those who sever ties of kin". On that Allah said, "Will you be satisfied if I bestow My favours on him who keeps your ties, and withhold My favours from him who severs your ties?" On that it said, "Yes, O my Lord!" Then Allah said, "It will be so" (Bukhari). This hadith clearly states that one who maintains ties with relatives; would earn the favour of Allah

10. Waking up Early

Prophet said, "Allah made the early hours blessed for my Ummah" (Ahmad). Waking up early is an important step to earn blessings. One would feel good throughout the day. One should start his day with Tahajjud Salah, at least he should start his day with the Fajar Salah. If one uses the time after Fajar, then he would get much more work done.

11. Marriage

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing" (Qur'an 24:32). When people get married they generally think that they will have to spend a lot of money

from then on. But the Qur'an says that, when the poor people get married, Allah would provide them from his bounty and give them more.

12. Performing Salah

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And enjoin prayer upon your family (and people) and be steadfast therein. We ask you not for provision; We provide for you, and the (best) outcome is for (those of) righteousness" (Qur'an 20:132). The verse makes it clear that one should perform Salah and should also command his family and the people to perform Salah. After that he should also be committed and consistent in performing Salah. The one who is attentive to Salah would earn blessings of Allah.

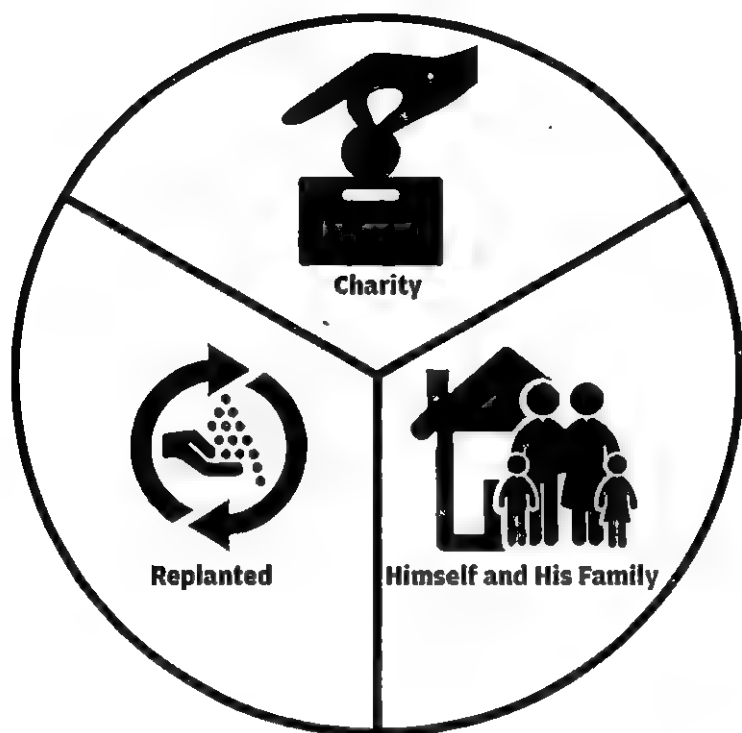
13. Seeking Allah's Forgiveness

The Prophet said, "If anyone continually asks forgiveness from Allah, Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress, and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide for him from where he did not reckon" (Abu Dawood). The hadith informs that the one who regularly seeks forgiveness from Allah; would be provided with bounties from sources which he would not expect.

Conclusion

If we begin an action with good intention, then it would have the support of Allah. Support of Allah for any activity, endows it with Barakah. The life of Prophet was enriched with Barakah. Thus, he was able to attain so much in such a small span of time. To attain Barakah, one ought to follow the lifestyle of Prophet. Barakah is important for people. The Prophet has taught us to supplicate for our host, (ask Allah for Barakah for the host). Barakah gives maximum benefit out of our available resources and makes life meaningful.

Consistent Charity



Introduction

Abu Huraira narrated from the Prophet (pbuh) that, once while a man was travelling in the wilderness he heard a voice in a cloud, ordering the angel of the cloud to pour its rain on a particular farm. So, the man followed the cloud and saw that it poured its rain on a rocky volcanic plain. All the water gathered in a stream and poured into a farm. The man saw the owner working in that farm and asked him his name. The name was the same that he had heard from the cloud. The man then related what he had heard and seen and inquired from the owner of the farm, what was special

about him that would explain the strange phenomenon. The owner explained that he would plant his farm and then split the harvest into three equal parts. One part he gave as charity, the second part he kept as food for himself and his family, and the third part he replanted (Muslim). The hadith basically talks about benefits of regular charity. Acts of charity make one eligible for support of Allah, in ways that one cannot imagine.

Explanation

The farmer was giving one third of his harvest as charity on a regular basis. This is why Allah sent rain especially for him. It is better to do small consistent good deeds rather than big but infrequent noble deeds. Prophet (pbuh) said that Allah loves most those deeds that are consistent, even if small (Bukhari). This shows the importance of consistency in good deeds, especially charity.

Rather than spending on charity only in Ramadan, the Prophet used to consistently spend throughout the year; he would be even more generous during the blessed month. Ibn Abbas said, "The Prophet was the most generous of people, and he was most generous during Ramadan" (Bukhari). Therefore, one should give charity on a consistent basis, and then spend more than usual, during Ramadan.

Allah was sending provision to the farmer (in the form of rain) because of his charity. Allah made the farmer a means to provide for the needy. Money is trial from Allah; it is not necessarily a sign of a person's righteousness. Some of the Prophets of Allah were not wealthy and some of the enemies of Allah were rich. The Prophet said, "Give charity without delay, for it stands in the way of calamity" (Al-Tirmidhi). Thus, charity would invite help from Allah, as check against calamities.

Conclusion

It is better to give charity than to receive it. One should be wary of repeatedly soliciting help from sadaqa and zakah funds. Those who refrain from using these funds (so that they will be available for others) will be provided for by Allah and be made self-reliant. The Prophet said: "The upper hand is better than the lower hand (he who gives is better than one who receives). One should first spend on one's dependents. Whoever abstains from seeking people's financial help, Allah will give him and save him from begging; Allah will make him self-sufficient" (Bukhari).

Allah's reward is the everlasting, beautiful Paradise, which contains only happiness and delight. Allah says that if the significance of this world was even as much as the wing of a mosquito in His scale, He would not give the unbelievers even a sip of water to drink. Therefore, the good things of this world are of little significance as compared to the Hereafter. One needs to understand the importance of charity and spending in the way of Allah, on a continuous basis. When one gives charity, he would get closer to Allah, and would deserve His help and Barakah.

One needs to develop a disposition to spend in charity, as that is the true Sunnah of the Prophet. The Sunnah is not simply performance of a few good deeds. Rather Sunnah teaches us to develop the habit to help others, in whatever way we can. Once we adopt this trait, our money, time, energy and resources would be spent in service to others. Their needs will take precedence over our personal comforts and worldly pursuits. Such was the excellent character of the Prophet. This noble behaviour is a consequence of understanding the world as it truly is.

Prophet Muhammad's Model of Holistic Caring



Introduction

Prophet (pbuh) cared about everybody around him. He set a lofty example and benchmark for people to achieve, with respect to caring and loving people. He would do his best in understanding the circumstances of people and help them in the best possible manner. Prophet not only helped people on his own, but also motivated others to do the same. The life of Prophet was filled with actions and advice about caring for parents, family, all Muslims, friends,

slaves, and all human beings including orphans and neighbours.

Categories

The following are the various categories covered by concern and care shown by the Prophet:

1. Parents

Prophet (pbuh) said, "Let him be humbled into dust; let him be humbled into dust; Let him be humbled into dust". Companions asked the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, who is he?". He said, "He who sees either of his parents during their old age or he sees both of them, but he does not enter Paradise" (Muslim). The hadith states that serving one's parents, especially when they are old, is a means of entering paradise; one who missed this opportunity indeed incurred a great loss.

Once, a man consulted the Prophet about taking part in a military campaign. The Prophet asked the man if his mother was still living. When told that she was alive, the Prophet said, "(Then) stay with her, for Paradise is at her feet" (Tirmidhi). On another occasion, the Prophet said, "God has forbidden for you to be undutiful to your mothers." (Bukhari).

2. Family

The Prophet said, "The most complete of the believers in faith are those with the most excellent character, and the best of you are the best in behaviour to their women" (Tirmidhi). Once Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet, was asked, "What did the Prophet do in his house?" She replied, "He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was the time for prayer he would go for it" (Bukhari). In another report Ayesha said, "He did what one of you would do in his house. He mended sandals and patched garments and sewed" (Adab Al-Mufrad). In yet another report she said, "He milked his goat" (Ahmad). The Prophet said

that, "The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives" (Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah). "A believer must not harm a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another" (Muslim).

3. Community

The Prophet said, "A faithful believer, to another is like the bricks of a wall, enforcing each other". While (saying that) the Prophet clasped his hands, by interlacing his fingers (Bukhari). Muslims are supposed to be like such bricks. Each one of them has its own special place, and each one of them is significant in one's own way. But all of them support one another and stick together like bricks of a wall.

The Prophet said, "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever" (Bukhari). In another hadith, the Prophet said, "The Muslims are like a single individual. If the eye is afflicted, then the whole body is afflicted. If the head is afflicted, then the whole body is afflicted" (Muslim). Prophet said, "It is sufficient evil for a Muslim that he should look down upon his brother. The life, wealth, and honour of a Muslim are inviolable by another Muslim" (Muslim). Thus, the Prophet instructed Muslims to care for one another and not to look down upon a believer.

4. Friends

In regard to companions, the Prophet cared a lot for them. One example would be quoted to substantiate the point. It is narrated in Bukhari. Once Jabir ibn Abdullah was on his way back from a Ghazwa (Military Expedition). He was riding a weak camel which could hardly walk, and it kept falling behind. Jabir was the son of Abdullah ibn Amr, who was killed in the battle of Uhad. The Prophet noticed Jabir and started talking to him. He

asked him to sell his camel, and after bargaining, they finalized the deal on an ounce of gold. Later the Prophet also learnt that Jabir had seven sisters to take care off; so, Jabir had married an elderly lady. On reaching Madina, Jabir went to the Prophet to hand over the camel. Prophet called Bilal, who acted as treasurer, and told him to give Jabir an ounce of gold and a fraction more. Then the Prophet returned the camel to Jabir and said, "Take your camel as well as a present".

Prophet knew that Jabir was in need of money. He also knew that Jabir was from a respected family. If Prophet would offer him direct financial help, Jabir might be embarrassed and not accept it. So, the Prophet went on to help Jabir by purchasing the camel from him. He bargained on price, so that Jabir felt that it was business. Buying the camel and then giving it as a gift to its previous owner; was a novel act, unique in its nobility and characteristic of the Prophet. This is an excellent example of caring for his companions, without causing embarrassment, to them.

5. Subordinates

Prophet also cared for slaves and servants. Anas ibn Malik said, "I was in service since I was ten years old. The Prophet never said, "why did you do this?". If I didn't do a thing (I was supposed to do), the Prophet never said, "Why didn't you do it". The Prophet said, "Give the worker his wages before his sweat dries" (Ibn Majah).

6. Mankind

Prophet restored human dignity and raised everyone's status as human being. He treated people well, as all are children of Adam. Once, a funeral passed by and the Prophet (pbuh) stood up. It was said to him, "It was a Jew". The Prophet said, "Was he not a soul?" (Bukhari and Muslim). A Jewish boy used to serve the Prophet and he fell sick. The Prophet went to visit him (Bukhari). When Abu Talib was sick, the Prophet visited him (Bukhari).

7. Enemies

The Prophet exhorted Muslims to treat prisoners of war so well that the captors used to provide the captives bread (the more valued part of the meal) and kept the dates for themselves. On the day when the conquest of Mecca happened, some companions wanted to take revenge. But the Prophet commanded that "no conflict or battle can take place today" and he named it 'the day of mercy'. After the conquest of Mecca, Islam became a recognised religion on global scale. But Prophet did not take revenge. He treated Meccans with compassion and forgave them.

8. Orphans

With respect to orphans, the Prophet said, "The guardian of an orphan and myself will be together in Paradise like this", and he held his two fingers together to illustrate. (Bukhari). Prophet also said, "The best house among Muslims is a house, in which there is an orphan, who is treated well. And the worst house among Muslims, is a house in which there is an orphan, who is treated badly" (Ibn Majah).

9. Neighbours

Prophet said, "By Allah, he is not a believer, by Allah, he is not a believer, by Allah, he is not a believer". It was asked, "Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?". He said, "One whose neighbour does not feel safe from his evil" (Bukhari). Prophet also said, "He is not a believer who eats his fill whilst his neighbour beside him goes hungry" (Bukhari). Abu Dharr reported, the Messenger of Allah commanded me thus, "O Abu Dharr, whenever you prepare a broth, put plenty of water in it, and give some of it to your neighbours" (Muslim). The Prophet said, "Jibril kept recommending me to treat my neighbour well until I thought that he would tell me to make him one of my heirs" (Bukhari).

10. Children

Prophet was more affectionate towards children than anyone else and he would be the first to greet children whenever he passed by them. (Ibn Sa'd). When the Prophet would see children of Ansar (those who provided the Prophet with help amongst the people of Madinah), he would stroke their heads with his hand, greet them with peace and pray for them. When the Prophet would return from a journey, children would come to welcome him. The Prophet would wait and ask them to ride with him. He would seat some of them on his steed, some sitting in front and others behind. He would also tell his companions to give some of them a ride.

The Prophet said, "I stand up for prayer intending to prolong it. In the meantime, I hear the wailing of a baby and I have to shorten my prayer, being apprehensive lest my recitation of a long verse may tell upon the baby's mother" (Bukhari). It was the time when Arabs used to feel embarrassed in showing affection to kids. It is reported that "Prophet was performing Salah, while he was carrying an infant girl named Umaamah, daughter of Abul-Aas. When he bowed, he put her on the ground, and when he stood up, he would carry her again" (Bukhari). This showed how the Prophet cared for the children.

11. Animals

With respect to animals, the Prophet said, "Fear Allah regarding these dumb animals. Ride them when they are in good condition and feed them when they are not" (Abu Dawood). The Prophet said, "No one should mark an animal's face nor strike it" (Al-adab Al-Mufrad). The Prophet said, "Don't you fear Allah about this beast which Allah has given in your possession. It has complained to me that you keep it hungry and load it heavily which fatigues it" (Abu Dawood).

During a journey, somebody picked up some birds' eggs. The bird's painful note and fluttering attracted the

attention of the Prophet who asked the man to replace the eggs (Bukhari). Prophet said, "A prostitute was forgiven by Allah, because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for the dog. So, Allah forgave her because of that. (Bukhari). This shows how much Prophet cared for animals.

12. Environment

Prophet said, "Do not uproot or turn palms or cut down fruitful trees" (Al-Muwatta). Once Prophet passed by Sa'ad while he was performing ablution. He advised Sa'ad not to waste water. Prophet encouraged plantation of trees by saying, "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows a seed, and then a bird, a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as an act of charity on his behalf" (Bukhari).

Conclusion

The Prophet treated all beings with compassion. He was sent to the earth as mercy for the worlds. Believers should care for all beings on the face of the earth. Human beings deserve compassion irrespective of religion, gender, age or rank. Lots of people are not able to do justice in taking care of others. Those deserving compassion are of so many categories, but one man who cared for them all, was the Prophet. When one starts caring for everybody around, he gets immense satisfaction and earns all round respect.

